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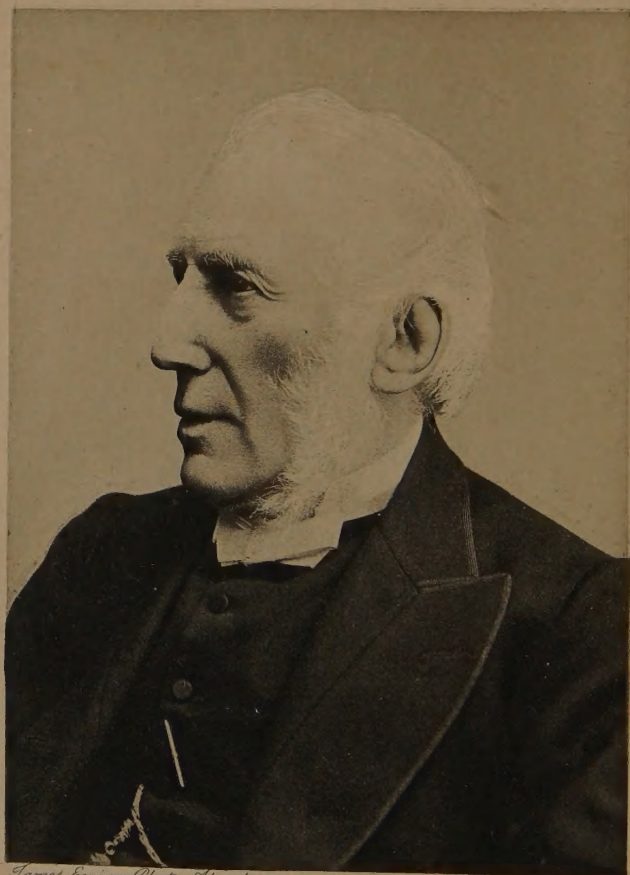
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DAVID BROWN

D.D., LL.D. : PROFESSOR AND PRINCIPAL OF
THE FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, ABERDEEN

A Memoir

BY WILLIAM GARDEN BLAIKIE

D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

Late Professor New College, Edinburgh

Author of

'Personal Life of David Livingstone'

'Thomas Chalmers'

etc.

LONDON

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P R E F A C E

THERE is little to be said by way of preface to this book, except that Dr. Brown kept no Diary, and preserved but a very few letters. This has rendered the task of his biographer difficult, and has prevented him from following a strictly chronological order throughout. On the whole, he hopes that, from the limited materials available, a fairly accurate portrait has been drawn of one whose personality and life were quite unique, and certainly form a most interesting and instructive study. He begs to express his obligations to all the friends who have contributed materials for the biography, and especially to members of Dr. Brown's family, without whose invaluable aid the task of the biographer would have been simply impossible.

April 1898.

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CHAPTER I

FAMILY HISTORY

PRACTICALLY, Dr. David Brown's life stretched from end to end of the nineteenth century, for he was born on the 17th August 1803, a little less than three years after it began, and he died on the 3rd July 1897, a little more than three years before its end.

It embraced the period of Waterloo, the Continental Revolutions of 1848, the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, and the Civil War in the United States; of Catholic Emancipation, the Reform Bill, Free Trade, the adoption of India into the Empire, and the great expansion of our Colonies; of the Evangelical revival, the Tractarian Movement, the Voluntary Controversy, the Disruption of the Church of Scotland, and the disestablishment of that of Ireland. Further, it included the era of rationalism, of 'the higher criticism,' and the development of the sensational philosophy; of the Anti-Slavery struggle, the rise of social reform and philanthropy, the conflict of Labour and Capital, the era of great cities, of rapid travelling, and of extended intercourse between country and country. It witnessed the birth of biology and palæontology, the outflashing of electricity, the advance of astronomy, the revolution in chemistry, and the rise and progress of evolution. Among its prose writers were Scott,

Hallam, Macaulay, Whately, Kingsley, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, Emerson, Carlyle, and Ruskin; while its poetical literature stretched from Wordsworth to Tennyson, and embraced Coleridge, Southey, Keats, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Longfellow, and the Brownings. It covered the active period of our modern missions: the period of Carey and Duff in India; of Morrison and Burns in China; of Moffat and Livingstone in Africa; of Williams and Patteson in the South Seas; of Hannington and Mackay in Uganda. It saw China and Japan, so long asleep and shut out from the modern world, opening their eyes and beginning to appreciate the civilisation and the Christianity of the West. And there was scarcely one of the events or the persons we have named but had an interest for David Brown, and an influence, too. He spent his life under the play of forces of extraordinary interest and variety; and in his own person, in a general way at least, he exemplified their effect,—taking on, in no ordinary degree, the form and pressure of the age.

His paternal grandfather was a man of striking individuality, if not genius — William Brown, the first minister of a country congregation of the Secession at Craigdam, in Aberdeenshire. The county of Aberdeen was not a congenial field for the seceders: it had offered very serious opposition to the Covenanters; and the old leaven of Prelacy, and the prevailing moderatism of the Established Church, made a cold atmosphere and an unsympathetic people. But all the more, when an evangelical preacher did appear, of great earnestness and popular gifts, and an utter contrast to

the run of ordinary ministers, he became a power in the district, and drew a large congregation. Brown of Craigdam was one of those marked men, of homely manner but burning soul, whose preaching created an extraordinary interest, and had very blessed effects. Under such a man many passed from death to life; while among the mass of his hearers his quaint sayings were handed about from mouth to mouth with great interest and appreciation, all the more because he knew the power of the Scottish dialect both to conciliate hearers and give point and pith to his remarks. He had the happy knack of seasoning his talk with the salt of the Gospel, without violence or affectation; a kindly, paternal way of bringing forward things unseen. His grandson remembered hearing an old man describe a sermon which he had preached at Knock, near Portsoy; the subject was Simeon's welcome of the infant Christ in the Temple. 'There did not appear to be much in the old man's arms,' said the preacher; 'and yet the salvation of the world depended on what was there: all was wrapt up in the infant whom Simeon held in his arms.' Then, holding out his own arms, as if embracing the Saviour whom Simeon deemed so precious, he appealed to the people with tearful voice, 'Have you, my freens, taken a grip o' Jesus?'¹

When Mr. Brown accepted a call to Craigdam, the congregation of poor farmers and labourers could promise him no more than fifteen pounds of salary—no doubt worth more then than now. But the grip of poverty neither impaired his activity nor lessened his cheerfulness. A brisk and lively mode of movement

¹ See Dr. Stark's *Lights of the North*.

procured for him the name of 'the rinnin' minister'; oddly enough, this peculiarity descended to his grandson, whose nimble movements, even at fourscore and ten, were the subject of universal remark. 'Is old Principal Brown still stepping about?' was once asked of an Aberdonian. 'No,' was the reply, 'he's *running* about.' *Apropos* his well-known Biblical writings on the Gospels and other books of Scripture, some called him 'the running commentary.'

One of the Craigdam minister's sons, whose name was Alexander, after enjoying with his two brothers the services of a tutor, Mr. Cowie (who afterwards became a famous minister in Huntly, as George Macdonald records), went to Aberdeen at the age of sixteen to push his fortune, and found an opening in a bookseller's shop. He was a brisk, active, good-looking young fellow, who could keep his eyes and his ears open for anything to help him in life; after three years of service, he began business on his own account. His story as the founder of a bookseller's business resembles that of the first John Murray, and of James Nisbet, W. and R. Chambers, and Thomas Nelson; although, from his provincial position, he could not, like them, build up a first-class publishing establishment. But he went on steadily, moving from Upper Kirkgate to Broad Street, and from Broad Street to Union Street, so that the progress of his barque might have been described by the motto of a well-known Edinburgh firm in a collateral department:—

'Firma pererrat aquas, et constabiltur eundo.'

To the ordinary business of a bookseller, Mr. Brown

added that of a circulating library; and when his stock accumulated to many thousands of volumes, he would sell off the surplus by auction. Here his lively manner and abounding humour stood him in good stead, for Aberdeen auctioneers (shrewd men!) know well that you must have people in good humour if you would look for a successful sale. He was also a bookbinder, and he tried to be a papermaker. As he prospered in business, so he rose in the esteem of the community. Marked for his shrewdness, integrity, and kindness, he was precisely the kind of man to be thought of for municipal honours. In those days there was no such thing as popular election of councillors or magistrates; each town council elected its successor. As he stood well with the old council, he came to be first a councillor, then a junior bailie, then senior bailie, and finally, provost. Twice he filled the Provost's chair, with credit to himself and advantage to the town, each time for two years, in 1822-23 and in 1826-27. His place of business became a rendezvous for literary men, with whom, from his lively manner and abounding humour, he was very popular. From the Government he received the office of Distributor of Stamps for the district of Aberdeen. Though contrary to the ordinary rule, this office was continued to his son.

Prospering in business, he acquired considerable property in the city and suburbs. But he came to know, like many, the fickleness of fortune; and at his death, which occurred in 1848, he had lost nearly the whole.

David Brown's mother, Catharine Chalmers, a woman among a thousand, came of a family distinguished for

generations by literary ability, and a fine taste in music and other arts. Her father was James Chalmers, proprietor and editor of the *Aberdeen Journal*. Her grandmother, Susanna Trail, a lady of very superior gifts, was descended from Robert Trail, who was minister of Greyfriars' Church, Edinburgh, in the seventeenth century; and, being ejected, took refuge in Holland after the restoration of Charles II. His son was author of a well-known work on the *Fulfilling of Scripture*, that must have had a peculiar interest for an exegetical scholar like his descendant, David Brown. There are still extant some letters from Mrs. Susanna Chalmers to her accomplished son, Alexander Chalmers, the editor of the *Biographical Dictionary*, that show her to have been remarkable both for piety and culture. Two of Mrs. Brown's sisters were married to well-known ministers: one to Mr. Burns of Brechin, father-in-law of Dr. Guthrie; the other to Mr. Burns of Kilsyth, father of William and Islay Burns.

All who remember Mrs. Alexander Brown describe her as a remarkable woman. Well connected, well educated, profoundly conscientious, and very earnest in religion, she had a strong influence on all who were in contact with her. A good housekeeper, hospitable to her friends, doing credit to her husband's position as chief magistrate, greatly interested in the charitable institutions of the city, some of which she helped both to organise and to administer, she was loved by many and respected by all. In business, as in other matters, she was of use to her husband. It is recorded of her that when great inconvenience was felt by the trade in Aberdeen, where the art of ruling paper with blue and

red lines was then unknown, so that account-books had to be sent up to Edinburgh to be ruled, the spirit and energy of Mrs. Brown made her mistress of the situation. She procured a ruling-machine from London, with instructions for its use; this machine she kept carefully locked up in a garret, and, with the aid of a female servant, was able to rule all the paper needed for Aberdeen—no small triumph, in sooth, for Aberdeen did not care to be dependent on Edinburgh! ¹

The family of Provost and Mrs. Brown were eight—five sons and three daughters. The three daughters were married to ministers, men of worth and ability, all of whom left the Established Church at the Disruption. Of the sons, three were in business, and two, David and Charles, in the ministry. The oldest, William, and the fourth, Charles, were those with whom David had the most intimate relations. William, born in 1796, at first in partnership with his father, thereafter Distributor of Stamps for the town and district of Aberdeen, was a man of singularly brisk and lively manner and flowing spirits, an enthusiastic musician, and a most zealous witness for Christian truth and helper in Christian work. His daughter Catharine became the wife of the Rev. Islay Burns, D.D., the successor of Mr. M'Cheyne as minister of St. Peter's, Dundee, and thereafter a professor in the Divinity College of the Free Church in Glasgow. Charles John, born 1806, was a distinguished minister, first in Glasgow, and thereafter in Edinburgh, a powerful Biblical and experimental preacher, intensely spiritual,

¹ See Walker's *Bookseller's Stall*.

and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1872.

It was an unhappy circumstance that Provost Brown and his wife attended different churches. Mr. Brown, born a seceder, had joined the Established Church; while Mrs. Brown, born in the Established Church, but unable to find in it the spiritual good she desired, had become a seceder. The congregation with which Mr. Brown had become connected, and of which he afterwards became an elder, that of the West Church, was steeped in Moderatism; that of Mrs. Brown, the Original Secession Church in Skene Street, under a very earnest minister, was highly evangelical, and was so strict in its discipline that it did not allow its members to attend worship, even occasionally, in the Established Church, holding that such attendance implied a violation of their protest against its defections. Mrs. Brown's children appear to have gone with their mother as hearers, but as communicants they joined the Establishment. Perhaps it is a fact unparalleled in all history, that while she had two sons and three sons-in-law in the ministry, for whom she had all a mother's affection and admiration, she never, save on one peculiar occasion, heard any of them preach. Her unflinching adherence to what she deemed duty, no matter how painful the self-denial it involved, must have had its effect, happily a good effect, on her family. As in the somewhat parallel case of Dr. Guthrie, whose mother likewise was a seceder, this connection must have imparted to her son David a sincere respect for a body at that time liable to be despised; and probably it communicated to his

personal religion an element of firmness and unworldliness,—something of the martyr spirit that would abandon life itself before it would do dishonour to what it held to be principle.

Though Mrs. Brown was an intensely conscientious and earnest Christian, her religious experience was not of a cheerful kind. Whether this is to be accounted for by her deep humility and self-depreciation, or whether it arose from a defect in the prevalent religious views of the time, when joy hardly got a place among the fruits of the Spirit, we do not profess to say. In a memorandum attached to a packet of her letters to himself, which her son David preserved with pious care, he thus wrote: ‘From my precious mother, to whom spiritually I owe more than I can express, who, like Bunyan’s “Mr. Fearing” in the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, “played upon the bass”; living in habitual bondage as to her own spiritual state, as did — and —, all persons of eminent grace, and all of whom I trust to meet, along with her who was “mine own flesh,” where we shall be “ever with the Lord.” Aberdeen, June 30, 1880.’

Very touching are the letters written in her old age to her son David, at that time a minister in Glasgow, begging of him: ‘Pray for me who cannot pray for myself or any other. Glad should I be,’ she adds, ‘could I say anything cheering as to the state of my soul, but it is not so. I doubt whether there has been any saving work in me. I sometimes get glimpses, but then they seem to be succeeded by great darkness, and I question their reality. O David, I have need of your prayers, that the Lord would show me His way, before

He cause my feet to stumble on the dark mountains.' And yet, in the judgment of her Christian friends, this woman in her heart was as lowly a penitent as ever bowed at the Throne of Grace, and as loyal and loving a servant of her God and Saviour as ever surrendered her soul to Him. Despite her fits of depression, her great earnestness and thorough consistency must have had a very happy effect on her family. Her son says that he owed more to her spiritually than he could express; rarely, indeed, has there been such a household, where all the children appear to have drunk of her spirit and followed her example.

David, the fourth son of the family, was born, 17th August 1803, in a somewhat remarkable locality—a house in Broad Street, close to Marischal College, his future *alma mater*; close to the house where Mrs. Byron and her son, the poet, had lived but five years before; close to his father's place of business, which was to inspire him with his love of books; and close to the town-house, where his father was destined to hold the provost's sceptre. At his birth he was so puny and feeble that his aunt and future mother-in-law, Mrs. Dyce, who was present, hoped it would please God to take him to a better world, little dreaming that he would all but touch the close of the century that had recently opened. To his mother he owed much in every way, even in the preparation of his lessons when he went to the grammar school. Studying beside her while she worked, he would sometimes stop. 'What is the matter, David?' she would ask. 'I cannot manage this exercise.' 'Well, let me

hear it in English,' she would say; and then she would suggest some equivalent form in English, and ask if it might not be turned that way. 'That's it—the very thing!' the boy would exclaim. It must have been a clever woman that could extricate from his difficulties in what to her was an unknown tongue the future dux of the grammar school.

If it was through the instrumentality of his mother that he obtained his deeper experiences, it was probably from his father that he derived his lively, cheerful, humour-loving temperament. And his father's business, too, among books seems to have had an important influence. His native literary taste would be drawn out by his bookish surroundings, by his constantly hearing of books and handling them, and by his mixing with his father's literary friends and acquaintances. Aberdeen, with its two Universities, had always been a highly literary town; imbibing its *genius loci*, and profiting by his opportunities, he would be stimulated towards higher acquirements, though he was the only member of his family that showed this tendency. His brother Charles, who also became a minister of the Gospel, and who was decidedly ahead of him in preaching gifts and spiritual power, had neither the scholarship nor the broad mind and wide culture of David.

CHAPTER II

STUDENT DAYS

AT the usual early age, having just entered his tenth year, after having learned a little English at the academy of Dr. Welsh, David Brown entered the grammar school of Aberdeen. It was before the days of Melvin, who shed so much lustre on it a few years later, but his teachers, he himself said, were able and scholarly men. We have no details of this period of his life, but that he entered on its work with zeal and diligence, and prosecuted it with eminent success is apparent from the fact that in his last year, 1817, he was dux of the school. Latin was then the one and only subject of instruction—Latin *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*. But the school had degenerated from those earlier days when Latin was spoken by the pupils, and when on the occasion of a royal visit they were able to deliver themselves in Latin addresses before the king.

In David Brown's days the grammar school occupied a quaint, one-storeyed building in the Schoolhill, in the form of a letter **I** laid flat, the middle part being the public school, and the projections representing the four class-rooms where the work of the school was carried on. Boys that were alert and attentive got

excellent instruction, but for the great majority, who had no natural liking for Latin, and whose interest there was absolutely nothing to stimulate, the great object was to enjoy what fun they could under the shadow of the 'factions,' as the seats were called, and to elude the vigilance of the master and the censor who was set to watch if any boy should be guilty of speaking. But the idle boys made up for their supineness indoors by their outburst of animation at the hour of release. In a twinkling the little playground was alive with the simple games of the period—it might be marbles, or pegtops, or buttons, or hand-balls, or the frisky sport of 'burry' or 'ke-how.' And, for the most part, the good boys were as fond of the games as the lazy. No doubt David Brown, with his bright, buoyant nature, entered into them heart and soul. Nor even in his remote old age was he ever out of sympathy with such playful activity. A venerable English headmaster, an associate of Dr. Brown's in the Company of Revisers, the late Dr. Moulton of Cambridge, told me that on one occasion when Dr. Brown came to call on him, he happened to be watching his boys at football. He made a kind of apology for what might appear to a stranger an unsuitable employment. Dr. Brown just laughed, and expressed the delight it gave him to see the boys at play.

His interest in the grammar school remained to the last. 'It was his delight,' said the *Aberdeen Journal* in its obituary notice, 'of recent years to attend the annual prize distributions, and only last week a letter was sent on his behalf expressing his regret at being unable to be present at the closing day of the session.'

It was a rare thing for any school to have among its visitors one who had entered it more than eighty years before, or (as was actually the case) to see the dux of 1817 shaking hands with the dux of 1895.

From the grammar school he proceeded to Marischal College. His teachers here were respectable men, but not of the highest mark; the most eminent was Dr. Robert Hamilton, Professor of Mathematics, a genius, but an eccentric one; known to the world as the author of a treatise that knocked on the head a proposal, under high auspices, for paying off the national debt; known to the Aberdonians for his absence of mind, of which many humorous stories used to be told. Another professor who had more than a local reputation was Dr. Patrick Copland, Professor of Natural Philosophy, the first to form a physical laboratory or museum in Scotland, for which purpose he spent much time and money, and travelled far in European countries.

In the absence of other material bearing on this period, we may be pardoned for quoting a letter addressed to David Brown, in Greek, by his friend, the Rev. Alexander Black, to whom he had paid a visit in his manse at Tarves. The writer was a remarkable man. When only a probationer, he had tried for the chair of divinity in King's College, which has always been filled by competitive trial, and he had acquitted himself so well, that although not the successful candidate (we shall hear of *him* by and by, Dr. Duncan Mearns), he received the degree of D.D. from the college, and from the Earl of Aberdeen the presentation to the parish of Tarves. Dr. Black was subsequently Professor of Divinity in Marischal College, and

thereafter for a time Professor of Exegetics in New College, Edinburgh. He was a man of extraordinary acquirements, of whom, coupling him for linguistic gifts with Dr. John Duncan, Dr. Guthrie once said they could speak their way to the wall of China. Both of them were Nathanaels—children in the things of this world, but wonderful scholars. Black's letter may show that at the close of his first session, David Brown was already able to read and appreciate a letter in simple Greek; it also throws some light on the social customs of the time, for we find him travelling homewards on foot, a distance of more than twenty miles. Pedestrianism, now becoming a lost art, served many a student in good stead in those days when coaches were rare, railways unknown, and bicycles undreamt of. In reading Dr. Black's letter we must remember that at Aberdeen in those days, as Hebrew was read without the points, so Greek was dealt with without the accents:—

Ουκ εδει με, φιλτατε Δαυιδ, επι τοσουτον χρονον σιωπαν. Παλαι εκομισαμην επιστολην παρα σου μετα την σην εξ ήμετερας οικιας αποχωρησιν· αλλ', ουκ οιδ' όπως, αι ανεβαλλομην την προς σε γραφην μεχρι της σημερον ήμερας· ουδε νυν σχολη μοι εστι γραφειν σοι ώσπερ βουλομαι. Ει ηδειν τη ήμερα της σης απ' εμου μεταχωρησεως, σε πασαν την εις Αβερδονιαν όδον πεξή ποιησειν αν, ουκ αν σε προς Ελλωνα (Ellon) επεμψα, ή γαρ ευθυς όδος εκ ταυτας χωρας εις την μεγαλην πολιν κειται δια μεσης της παροικιας της Ουδνιας (Udny). Μαθηματικος εις, Δαυιδ, και οιδας ακριβως τους δυο πλευρας του τριγωνος μακροτερας ειναι της τριτης.

Χαιρω και ευφραινομαι μαθων εκ της σης επιστολης Ξενοφωνα σοι εν χερσιν ειναι· ελπιζω γαρ επι και νυν σε αναγινωσκειν

τουτον τον γλυκυτατον συγγραφεα· Αφελης εστι και σαφης, ὡς αληθως ει και τις αλλος των Ἑλληνικων συγγραφεων· και ουδαμοθεν αλλοθεν δυνηση καρπουσθαι μειζονα ωφελειαν προς την ακριβεστατην γνωσιν της Ἑλλαδος φωνης.

Παντα σου τον χρονον ὑπολαμβάνω εν τοις της Ακαδημιας μαθημασιν αναλίσκεσθαι. Εαν δε σοι σχολη ὑπαρχη γραφειν μοι επιστολην, πολλην μοι ἡδονην παρεξει το παρα του μαθανειν παντα τα περι των σων επιτηδευματων. Ἡ μητηρ μου, περι ἧς εν τη επιστολῃ φιλοφρονως ερωτας, ευ μαλα ὕγαινει τη χρηστοτητι της Θειας Προνοιας.

Αυτη ἄμα και εγω ἐλπίζομεν σε και τους σους ευπραττειν.

Ερρωσο Δαυιδ· παντα σοι ευ και καλως γενοιτο.

ὁ σος φιλος,

Αλεξανδρος ὁ Μελας.

Εκ του μουσείου εν τη παροιχίᾳ Ταρνεσιᾶ, τη β' του Φεβρουαριου μηνος, του α.τ.ε.τ.ο.η. ετους αωκ'.

Having passed through the ordinary four years' course of study, David Brown took his degree of M.A. in 1821.

His next step was to enter the Divinity Hall. That he did so under the influence of solemn feelings, and not merely (as was too common at the time) as a step towards a comfortable livelihood, we infer from various considerations. His mother's instructions had made a deep impression on him; it had become a joy to him to think of the love of God and the grace of the Saviour; this experience suffered eclipse as his studies went on, but returned to him afterwards with all the satisfaction of a recovered treasure. He was one of a very few students who met for prayer and reading of the Scriptures. We know that there were students of more worldly spirit with whom he fought hard, but

apparently in vain, to bring them under more spiritual views of the ministry. We might name one who afterwards became distinguished, and with whom he had many a walk, pressing his views upon him, but at the time in vain; later in life, however, the distance between them was not so great. In foreign missions he had already begun to take an interest, for he spoke, in his opening address as Moderator of the General Assembly of 1885, of a never-to-be-forgotten address of John Wilson, afterwards of Bombay, in the Divinity Hall of Aberdeen.

Students of divinity at that time had to attend divinity classes on alternate days in Marischal and King's Colleges. In Marischal College, David Brown would have for his teacher Principal W. Laurence Brown, an able man, but of the moderate school, who had gained the greatest literary prize in Scotland, amounting to twelve hundred pounds, in connection with the Burnett foundation, for an Essay on the Being and Attributes of God. The gainer of the second prize was the Rev. John Bird Sumner, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; and it was a proud distinction for Aberdeen that

‘the north for ance had dung the south,’

and that the presbyterian kirk had left the English second in the race. But Laurence Brown was cold and dry, a man from whom students could derive no enthusiasm.¹ The Professor of Hebrew was a man of very

¹ His son, the late Dr. Robert J. Brown, Professor of Greek, was a man of evangelical views and much warmer temperament; he joined the Free Church in 1843, and was chosen Moderator of the General Assembly in 1846.

different stamp,—the Rev. James Kidd, minister of Gilcomston Chapel of Ease, the most popular preacher in the town, a champion of the evangelical cause, but certainly not a great teacher.¹ In King's College, the Professor of Divinity was Dr. Duncan Mearns, a very able man and accomplished theologian, but wofully stiff and dry. Dr. David Brown has recorded in his *Life of Dr. John Duncan* the remarkable impression made on the latter by Dr. Mearns's prayers, at the time when he was floundering in the darkness of atheism. It was a strange spectacle—a student of divinity owning himself unable to believe in the existence of God; but such was Rabbi Duncan's position for a considerable part of his divinity course. The first step towards the light arose from Dr. Mearns's prayers. What impressed Duncan was, that they were manifestly addresses to a living being, and it was borne in on him intuitively that that being must have an objective existence. It was no logical argument that turned him from atheism, but simply the influence of a true and reverent believer's prayers, conveying the sense of a living fellowship between him and the object of his worship. Though nearly all the rest of his life Duncan was in a position of direct antagonism to all Dr. Mearns's ecclesiastical views, he never forgot this obligation, and only a few days before his death he said, 'I don't wish my obligations to Dr. Mearns to be forgotten. He called out all that was in me to combat him, but unsuccessfully. And I do remember his perhaps too distant, but so respectful prayers. I was an atheist when

¹ See Professor Masson's testimony to him in *Macmillan's Magazine*; and the recently published *Memoir* by Rev. Dr. Stark, Aberdeen.

I entered his class; and though it did not come to saving faith, I am under great obligation to him.'

Following up Dr. Duncan's estimate of Dr. Mearns, Dr. David Brown gives us his own:—

' Having myself studied under that able man for four years, I can attest the striking accuracy of what Mr. Duncan here says of his prayers, and justify his testimony to the power of his lectures. From the first day I entered his class to the day on which I left it, I was riveted and awed by the terse dignity with which he expressed himself in those short yet comprehensive prayers, and even more by the severe gravity and tremulous reverence with which they were uttered. One might have heard a pin drop during the three or four minutes that they lasted. His lectures were framed on the model of Dr. Hill's, in respect both of their subject matter—the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith—the severely rational convincing strain of them, and withal the absence from them of all evangelical fervour. Like his prayers, they were grave, elevated, impressive—but distant. With nothing that could be called original, they yet fixed the attention, and produced a marked impression, owing largely to the stamp of the man and his manner of delivering them. Coming as I did from a school of religious thought and ecclesiastical sympathy very different from his—one, too, to which every now and then he showed his very deep dislike—I also entered his class in a scarcely less combative spirit than Mr. Duncan did, though on different grounds, and expected to detect in his lectures, sooner or later, theological flaws. But the result was the same—I also was silenced. Natural theology he treated more fully, and (according to my recollection) more satisfactorily than Dr. Hill: thus remarkably suiting Mr. Duncan's state of mind on entering his class. His unhappy

reply to Dr. Chalmers's work on the *Evidences of Christianity*—though it damaged his own reputation, and was fitter to be withdrawn from public notice than recommended for the undoubtedly sound principle which lay at the bottom of it—showed at least how deeply the foundations of all religious belief were settled in his own mind ; and that Mr. Duncan should have been placed under his commanding influence on his first entrance on theological study in the Church of Scotland is to be noted as a special mercy.'

But by far the most important event in connection with Dr. Brown's theological studies, was his own intercourse with Dr. Duncan.¹ It is almost needless to recall to the recollection of our readers the remarkable gifts, both of intellect and grace, that met in Duncan,—a man of whom, a short time after his death, there were published no fewer than three biographies, in whole or in part,—the *Colloquia Peripatetica* of Professor Knight, the *Life* by Dr. Brown, and the *Reminiscences* of Dr. Moody Stuart. Duncan, though converted to theism, had not gone further during the term of his theological studies, and having little or no heart for the ministry, had tried in vain to earn a livelihood as a public teacher, both in England and Scotland, his eccentric habits invariably causing failure.² He had returned to Aberdeen, and

¹ In what follows in this connection we are greatly indebted to Dr. Brown's own *Life of Dr. Duncan*, the part that bears on his early intercourse with his friend being virtually a chapter of autobiography, as well as a chapter of Dr. Duncan's life.

² Among Dr. Brown's papers I have found a letter from an old baptist minister, Rev. John Gerrie, Elora, Ontario. He tells how Mr. Duncan was appointed schoolmaster (or rather assistant to the

was giving private instructions in various languages. He was then twenty-five, and David Brown eighteen. Before entering the Divinity Hall, David was desirous to know something of Hebrew, and agreed with Mr. Duncan for a quarter's tuition; but Duncan being fully employed, the hour between half-past six and half-past seven in the morning had to be fixed on. Very often, owing to his irregular habits, half-an-hour elapsed before Duncan appeared, and on some occasions he did not appear at all. But what Brown got from him as a teacher of languages was invaluable. Stores of information in Oriental literature were poured out; vistas of interest were opened; that greatest of intellectual treats to a young inquiring mind came to young Brown, when glimpses of unexplored territory of supreme interest and beauty flash before him, and he is conscious of a guide that can lead him through them all. Among other books that came into his hands at this time, was Michaelis's *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Michaelis inoculated him with his own spirit of fearless Bible research, and led him to question some of his traditional beliefs. Finding him in this

schoolmaster) in the parish of Pitsligo, near Fraserburgh, and lodged with his father and mother who lived in that neighbourhood. They had come from the district of Huntly, and had been devoted members of the congregation of the great and good Mr. Cowie, and (probably through this means) were friends of Duncan's parents. He seemed to be in a state of doubt and conflict; but Mr. Gerrie remembered well the strange flashes of thought that would burst from him on many subjects, and the marvellous speculations he would propound on the works and ways of God. Absent in mind, uncouth in manner, slender in figure, and feeble in frame, he was unable to control the scholars, several of whom were grown lads, and in a few months he gave up the school.

state of mind, Duncan drew specially to him, and they became great friends. Almost daily they walked and talked, and gradually, in the course of time, Brown became infected with some of the theological views of his friend. He found himself drawn and bound to him by a powerful magnetic force, as he was afterwards, on very different topics, attracted and bound to Edward Irving. The process had gone on so gradually and imperceptibly, that it was with a start of surprise to his pupil, that one day Duncan, speaking of their common views, used the expression, 'We Unitarians.' The expression, however, was not unsuitable to their views at the time on the person and work of Christ.

At last, in 1825, Duncan took courage, drugged his conscience into subscribing the Confession of Faith, and was licensed as a preacher. His first sermon was delivered in the West Church, virtually the High Church of Aberdeen. His text was, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' Not believing in our Lord's Divinity or His Atonement, he spoke with power and eloquence of 'the man Christ Jesus, the flower of humanity, the perfection of human beauty, the archetypal Son of God, into whose spirit whoso drinks, and whose bright example whoso copies, becomes himself so far forth a son of God.' David Brown was there eagerly listening, and greatly charmed. The idea was derived from Herder, but the drapery was Duncan's, and a beautiful picture it was. This, then, was the terminus—the landing stage of Duncan's teaching: Jesus Christ the crown and glory of humanity,

but not the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. In after years, Brown used to shudder at the perilous conclusion he had reached; had his course not been providentially arrested, he felt assured that he would have sunk into the darkness of utter unbelief.

Yet we are not to suppose from this eclipse of his faith, that all his past experiences were unreal. The *Pilgrim's Progress* has made us familiar with similar experiences, even in common life, and strange though it may appear, students of divinity lie exposed to them, even beyond the common measure. It is no easy ordeal for a youth who has shared the simple faith of godly parents, and accepted the great truths of the Gospel as one accepts the axioms of Euclid, to be confronted first of all with the speculations of philosophy, that sometimes make him doubt even his own existence; and then to find every Christian position assailed by unbelievers with subtle and telling arguments which he never heard of before, and which are often most perplexing. To his horror, he discovers that many of his beliefs have had little other foundation than human authority; and so far from the great doctrines of Christianity standing out in all their divine strength unassailed by human foe, he finds that opponents of the Gospel, like the clansmen of Roderick Dhu, lie concealed behind every bush and rock, compelling him to fight his way through almost impenetrable hosts of objections and difficulties. Happy the youth who at the first, under a powerful sense of his own case as a sinner, and a vivid perception of the adaptation of Christ's grace to his needs, accepts Him

Doubts

as his personal Saviour, and comes into union with Him by a link of the Holy Spirit's forming. Swing as he may on the surges of doubt and unbelief, he cannot be carried out, a helpless waif, into the wide ocean; sooner or later he must return. The good shepherd will not leave his wandering sheep on the mountains; he will go after him and find him, and bring him back rejoicing.

On completing his studies at the Divinity Hall of Aberdeen, David Brown had a strong desire to spend some time in Germany, but as obstacles arose to this plan, he took instead a winter in Edinburgh. While there, he seems to have extended the area of his studies, for, among his academical relics, there is a class ticket showing that he attended the class of Dr. Hope, Professor of Chemistry. What other classes he attended does not appear. But the winter in Edinburgh had very important results in another direction. He came under new religious influences that, in spite of himself, prepared him for a great change. Pulpit ministrations of rare intellectual power, of uncommon earnestness, and of searching spirituality, revived all the experiences of his early religious life, and renewed the joy with which he used to think of redemption through the grace of Christ and the power of the Spirit. Among those to whom he owed most in this connection, were the late Dr. Gordon of the High Church, and the late Dr. M'Crie, author of the *Life of John Knox*. But a more specific impression was made on him by a foreigner—Dr. Cesar Malan of Geneva, who was preaching for a time in Edinburgh, and urging his views of the freeness of the

Gospel on a somewhat astonished, but still not opposed community. The way in which Malan pressed the duty of coming at once to a clear determination of the state of things between the sinner and God, and the marvellous effects that were seen to arise from his conversation, imparting to Christians of long standing a liberty, light, and joy of heart unknown before, and turning not a few who had been utter worldlings or worse from the power of Satan unto God, impressed both David and his brother Charles, who was with him at the time, as the true method of presenting the Gospel. Recovering his old sense of the grandeur of God's unspeakable gift to a lost world, and the glory of the method of peace through the blood of the cross, he was seized at the same time with an intense desire that his friend Duncan should share his experience.

When he returned to Aberdeen he called on his friend, eager to be 'at him.' But when he tried to touch on vital topics, he found him dry and reserved. It seemed as if he had heard of the change on David, as he always called him, and was expecting an assault, but was determined to ward it off, if he could. They went out, as was their custom, to walk. The night was fine, and they paced backwards and forwards along a retired street. At every point the attempts of Brown to get into serious conversation failed. In his helplessness he sent up a prayer, like Nehemiah, to the God of heaven; and not in vain, for a reference having been made by Duncan to their former conversations on the person of Christ, Brown felt that his opportunity had now at last come.

The rest of this memorable conversation is given in Dr. Brown's own words :—

“ Ah ! friend, these were sad days to me,—days of disorganised beliefs, of relaxed spiritual and moral tone, of universal and mournful declension. True, I made immense progress in the literature of theology, in Biblical criticism, in exegetical insight ; and I despair not some day or other turning that to good account in the service of Christ. But the true key to the Bible was then wanting, and not having the mind of God, how could I rightly interpret His Word as a whole ? But now I see things in another light ; and to me it would be a joy unspeakable if you and I, who so long walked together in darkness and pride of speculation, were now to see eye to eye, and help, more than ever we hindered, one another.” The ground thus broken, we set to ; he making desperate attempts to blunt the edge of my arguments and pleadings—sometimes trying to close the discussion by saying, “ That is your opinion, but it is not mine ” ; sometimes making light of the difference between us—while I held to my point, feeling as I proceeded that I was gaining upon him, and thus acquiring fresh courage. By this time it was midnight, and though we had done little else than go backwards and forwards over the same space of ground for more than three hours, now that it was as dark as it could be, our walking ground became still more contracted. Under what Aberdonians well know as the Correction Wynd dry bridge, we did nothing now but walk backwards and forwards for fully two hours or more. “ Tell me,” said I, “ what of natural and revealed religion you hold to, that I may know what common ground we have.” This appeal had a wonderful effect. He stood stock still. Then turning round to me with an air of unusual solemnity, he said, “ David, I must now be plain with you. Time was when I was so sunk in atheism, that

once on seeing a horse I said to myself, 'There is no difference between that horse and me.' But Dr. Mearns brought me out of that, and I have never since doubted the existence of a personal, living God. But he convinced me, besides, of the truth of the Bible as a historical record. So I have come to believe in the Jewish religion and in Christianity as the complement of it. But the *doctrines* I can't and I won't believe—I mean the Divinity and Atonement of Christ." "Again, but what if they are written in that Bible which you say you admit? you'll have to believe them. Ay, friend, that towering Luciferian pride of yours must come down, and you must become a little child, willing to be taught, else you have no part in the Kingdom of Heaven, for Christ your Master says so. But tell me this, what has your religion done for you? I know what mine has done for me; what has yours done for you?" "Well, not much, I confess. To tell you the truth, the words 'heaven' and 'hell' sound in my ears with as little effect as the words 'tables' and 'chairs.' And yet I do sometimes feel a little." "What you *feel* is not the question. What I want you to tell me is, *are you holy?*" I knew I was here touching a sore place. So looking him full in the face, the dim light just sufficient to reveal his cowering look, I waited his answer. "No," he replied, "I am not." "No, nor ever will be," I hastily interposed, "so long as God's way of salvation from sin is to such Greeks as you foolishness; but to us who believe, it is the power of God." "Ah! David, but that's what I can't take in yet. Can't I be saved without the *doctrines?*" "What, are you going to potter at that rate with so solemn a thing as salvation, trying at how cheap a rate, with how small a sacrifice of your own prepossessions, you can be let off? If my apprehensions and experience are worth anything, all that is worth a straw in Christianity lies in the '*doctrines.*' Not that I undervalue its lofty views of

God, of morality, of holiness, of a future state, and so on ; but take away the great doctrines that you wince at, and you loosen the foundations on which all the other things rest, and shake the whole edifice. But only surrender your soul to Christ in the Gospel, and those great powers of yours, now running to waste, will seem as if they were newly imparted, and go to noble effect." "Well, David, all I can say is, I can't take that in yet." There was something, however, in the subdued and half tremulous tone in which this was said, which, far from dissipating, only encouraged me to proceed, but in quite a changed tone. Taking it for granted that I had so far gained his assent, and believing that his difficulty would now lie chiefly with that "evil heart of unbelief," I suggested one encouragement after another, till, like a child, he proceeded to question me how, *supposing* him a real Christian, he was to act in such and such circumstances. Never during all this time had we thought how the hours were passing ; in fact, now we scarcely walked at all, but under the bridge stood talking in a subdued tone, and so lovingly, that I thought he would take me into his arms. We now spoke of parting, it being, to the best of my recollection, between two and three in the morning ; but he would not let me go till we arranged to meet next day at noon. This gave me the cheering conviction that all unwillingness to come to close quarters with me had vanished, and that we were now at length on a new footing together. So with a full heart I went home, going to sleep with little sense of fatigue, and rising with the tranquil hope that what had been sown in weakness by me might be reaped by the honoured servant of Christ, Dr. Cesar Malan, who was to arrive in Aberdeen that evening. . . .

'At noon, as arranged, I now went to meet my friend ; and that we might not be interrupted, we went a little beyond the suburbs. But this time our walk was not very

long. The truth is, it was so exceedingly satisfactory, that I rather wished to avoid exhausting the great subjects of our last night's talk, that he might be fresh for the expected stranger. I found him meek as a lamb; in fact, the gentle, subdued appearance which he presented, and his half-timid eagerness to get into childlike talk rather than theological discussion on the topics of the preceding night, astonished and cheered me. Intense anxiety to be *such a Christian* as I had described and borne in upon him the night before, combined with an inability to see how *he* could ever be such—his all but certainty, judging from the past, that even should he flatter himself that he was such, and go on consistently for a time, he would sooner or later relapse into his old state or worse—in this state of mind he began to question me much as follows:—"You say, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature—new in his views of holiness and sin, of the service of Christ and the devil, of the world, of all things. Well, but suppose I think myself a new creature, and all things for a while are new to me; but after that newness wears off, I fall back and sink into my old ways, am I still to flatter myself that I am a regenerate man, and how am I to recover myself?" "Don't you be making provision," I replied, "for a time of backsliding. Look rather to the way of safety. Hear what the Lord Jesus says: 'Abide in Me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me.' Would the Prodigal Son, welcomed back, and with a full heart seated at his father's table, occupy himself in speculating on the probability of his playing the prodigal afresh, and considering what in that case would be the proper course for him to take? Better far say this: 'I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. What have I to do any more with idols? I will watch and pray that I enter not into temptation.'"

This strain seemed to find its echo in his own breast, for he answered not a word. Still there was a want of confidence, and I judged it inexpedient to press him further. I was afraid to put a rash hand to that tender state of mind which he seemed to be in. So, having told me that he was coming to meet with Malan that evening in my brother's house, we parted after I had said a few encouraging words to him, which he listened to in the spirit of a child.'

Dr. Malan had come to Aberdeen, and was the guest of William Brown, David's eldest brother. Through him Malan and Duncan were brought together two days after the midnight conversation. Malan dealt with him in his usual way, pressing on him that if he believed that Jesus was the Christ, he was born of God. In due time, after many conversations and mental conflicts which we cannot here go into, the desired result came.

Next day, or, as Dr. Brown thinks, the day after, Dr. Duncan passed through a memorable experience, which we give in his own words:—

“Well, next day, as I sat down to study, and took my pen in my hand, I became suddenly the passive recipient of all the truths which I had heard and been taught in my childhood. I sat there unmoving for hours, and *they came and preached themselves to me*. There was now no investigation such as I desired; but presentation of the truth to me passive. And I felt, sitting there, as if in that hour I had got matter for sermons for a lifetime.

“Now the temptation to daily sin was gone. I had not even to fight with it. And I was in an almost infantile state of mind—so that when I mislaid a paper in my

study, I would kneel down and pray to find it, and then go and seek for it." In fact, night after night (as he told Mr. Moody Stuart), he laid himself down to rest with the infants' prayer on his lips (not precisely as Mr. Moody Stuart gives it, but as taught and repeated in the north of Scotland):—

"This night when I lie down to sleep,
I give the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

In after years, when recalling the happy change that had passed over him, Duncan named Mearns, David Brown, and Malan, but chiefly Malan, as the three men to whom he had been most indebted.

It was no small service in one who was but a student in divinity to contribute to bring such a man as Duncan into the light. And this was not the only case of the kind. He was useful in a similar way to one who afterwards became a prominent lay citizen of Aberdeen. One day, after a walk with him by the seashore, this young man went home, told his mother of the change, and expressed his wish to begin family prayers. And probably there were similar cases now unknown. Mr. Brown neither shrank from recognising the fact that he had been an instrument in very blessed work, nor claimed for himself any credit on account of it. From first to last he made little of himself; he accepted meekly the disappointments in life of which he had his full share; and at the best would hold himself to have been a servant who had conferred no favour because he had only done that which it was his duty to do.

CHAPTER III

PROBATIONER DAYS

AFTER his return from Edinburgh, and the occurrences we have just narrated, David Brown was licensed as a probationer by the Presbytery of Aberdeen in June 1826. His father, however, thought that before looking out for a charge, it would be a benefit to him to spend a little time in London, where he had many relations and friends. Accordingly, in 1827, he went on a two months' visit, carrying with him several introductions, and among others one to Mr. James Nisbet, a brother-Scot, who, like his father, had built up an important bookselling and publishing business, but on strictly evangelical lines. Mr. Nisbet was much interested in his friend, and among other kindnesses brought him into contact with Edward Irving. This gave rise to an interesting episode in his life,—his connection with that celebrated preacher. Happily Dr. Brown has furnished us with material for this chapter, partly in a paper contributed to the *Free Church Magazine* in 1851, at the request of the present writer when editor of that journal, and partly in two papers contributed to the *Expositor* in 1887, entitled, 'Personal Reminiscences of Edward Irving.'

At the time of his visit to London, Irving was at

the very zenith of his fame, and Mr. Brown was naturally eager to discover the secret of his unrivalled popularity. Admission to his chapel was by ticket only, but through Mr. Nisbet, who was one of the officebearers of the church, Mr. Brown got the right of admission during the whole period of his London visit. The audience was unprecedented ; royal dukes, cabinet ministers, and aristocrats of all grades waiting till the preacher entered the pulpit.

‘Rarely’ (wrote Dr. Brown in the *Expositor*) ‘is such a figure to be seen in pulpit or platform. Isaac Taylor, whose guest he was that very year, took his profile, and having himself been bred an artist, wrote under it, “This outline was made with very great care. The head measures one foot in both dimensions. Mr. Irving stood more than six feet in height. His strength was prodigious and his agility surprising.” His glossy black hair, neatly shaded off in the middle of his broad forehead added to his attractive appearance, and even the otherwise repulsive cast in his eyes, owing to the benignity of his expression, only gave him a look quite his own. . . . As he read out the opening psalm, his clear, sonorous voice and distinct articulation, but still more the dignified simplicity and elevated purity of his style in prayer struck me at once. But his reading of the Scripture was to me something new. It was not his melodious voice and the full compass of it, but the life he threw into what he read, that seemed to carry his hearers into the very sense and circumstances of the passage before them, making what was familiar enough to them before seem new. . . .

‘I was introduced to Mr. Irving by Mr. Nisbet, and, at his own invitation, called on him without delay. His cordial and unaffected talk made me feel at home at once, and I availed myself of his invitation to call often, all the more that the subjects of his conversation were those on which I had thought and read a good deal, and in a line akin to his own.’

The new church in Regent Square was completed in 1827, shortly after David Brown left London, so that he missed that interesting occasion. Readers of the *Life of Chalmers* will remember the astonishment if not annoyance of the great preacher from Scotland caused by Irving, who took the opening exercises, offering a prayer and delivering an exposition of Scripture which occupied an hour and a half. In the summer of 1828, Dr. Brown had another opportunity of hearing Irving, at Roseneath on the Clyde, where crowds flocked to listen to his preaching. This was the time of that visit to Edinburgh when he filled St. Cuthbert’s Church every morning at six o’clock, delivering those lectures on prophecy which Dr. Chalmers characterised as showing ‘power and riches, and gleams of poetry and beauty, but quite woful.’

Mr. Brown seems to have had no regular engagement as a probationer during 1828-29, a circumstance that perhaps disposed him the more to think favourably of a letter that reached him toward the close of the latter year from Mr. Irving and all the officebearers of the church, inviting him to succeed the Rev. A. J. Scott, who had been Mr. Irving’s assistant for most of that time. It was no small honour to receive such an offer; his parents, however, were

unwilling that he should go to London, believing that this might interfere with his prospects at home; but his own decision was to go. Accepting the office of assistant, he preached for the first time in Regent Square church on 3rd January 1830, and he continued in the office till 26th April 1832—a period of two years and four months. During the first year he lived with his friend, Mr. Nisbet.

It was Irving's habit to remain in his study in the forenoon, and after an early dinner, to enjoy a walk, and attend to his other duties. 'He would ask me,' continues Dr. Brown in the *Expositor*, 'to walk and chat with him, and the best talks I ever had with him were on these occasions, when, with hat in hand in the open fields, he would give free play, not to his mind, but to his noble physique, which being once or twice observed, was set down as a wish to attract attention, while our whole talk at such times convinced me that he was unconscious of any presence except our two selves. All subjects of common interest were then turned over, and he would try to draw me out; and when anything I happened to say struck him, he would drink it in with a humility which touched me. One such case I remember. He had quoted those words of our Lord: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10), and he asked me what that might mean. After a pause I said, "What would you say to this? None are allowed to enter without leave into the presence of our sovereign, but the nurses of the royal children have free access, when-

ever they have anything to say about the children." "That's worth a talent of gold," he said. Of Mrs. Irving all that I then saw was just enough to show that she lived in the light of her husband's countenance, but to what extent she was able to enter intelligently into his ideas, I had no means of judging until long after.'

Among Mr. Brown's duties as assistant to ~~Mr.~~ ^{Edward} Irving, one was to visit the Sunday-schools, once a month each, ~~when many of the parents were present, and~~ when one of the exercises was the repetition of metre psalms. An incident connected with this duty made such a deep impression on him that more than sixty years afterwards, when he was in his ninety-second year, he recorded the circumstance in a journal conducted by the Young Men's Christian Association of Aberdeen. A poor, sickly boy, too unwell to be out, had repeated the twenty-third psalm. Next month it was reported that he was dying, and Mr. Brown went to see him, and found him in a miserable place, a sort of drying loft. The mother met him with tears in her eyes, and told him that her boy had been speaking all night. 'What has he been speaking about?' asked Mr. Brown. 'Well, sir, you see I am a Roman Catholic, and I don't know your hymns, but it's something about death's dark vale.' 'Oh! my woman, I know well what your boy has been speaking about; take me to him.' 'On reaching his bed I found it was a deal box, and he was lying on straw. "My dear boy," I said, as he looked up smiling, "you are dying." "Yes, sir." "Are you afraid to die?" "No, sir." "Why?" "Because I am going to Jesus." "But how do you know that you are going to Jesus?" "Because

I love Him." It was a child's answer, but it was music to me.'

Some years before this, Irving's attention had been drawn to the subject of prophecy by James Hately Frere, who had published his books on Daniel and the Apocalypse, in connection with the second Advent. This study of prophecy came to give a special character to Irving's ordinary ministrations, which not only diminished his popularity, but prepared the way for opinions and practices that ultimately wrecked him. Of the earlier discourses of Mr. Irving, such as we have in the first volume of his collected works, Mr. Brown, in common with the Christian world generally, had the highest opinion. But when he entered on the study of prophecy, it turned out to be one for which his rich and surging imagination, never under sufficient control, ill fitted him, while the spell of a mysterious future, believed to be at the very door, laid him open to influences that could not but warp his judgment; so that his popularity declined.

'The whole subject of prophecy' (to quote from the paper in the *Free Church Magazine*) 'was distasteful to his fashionable auditors, who, though they endured it for a while from the novelty of the theme, and the oratory by which it was lighted up, disappeared by degrees to make way for a class of hearers scarcely more satisfactory,—the lovers of the marvellous and the exciting,—who crowded, not only into his church, but around his person at all hours, offering him the incense of their fulsome adulation, and pouring into his open ear their startling speculations and exegetical crudities, to the exceeding injury of his too pliant and confiding mind. By little and little the whole character of his preaching became altered. Addicting

himself almost exclusively to the expository style, he manifested a growing indifference to oratory, gradually disused his manuscript in the pulpit, and at length—having meetings for exposition and prayer of one kind or other night and morning—fell into the habit of extempore preaching, in a pretty literal sense of that term: and though during all this time his pen was in constant employment for the press, a comparison between his earlier and later writings will show as great a change upon the healthiness of his thinking, and the purity of his style, as upon the soundness and soberness of his views, as he advanced in his chequered career. We refrain from noticing the opinions which Mr. Irving took up and pressed so powerfully upon the church, on the person of Christ, and the gifts of the Spirit—near akin, however, with all their error, to some of the most glorious and inspiring truths of Christianity, to which Mr. Irving has unquestionably been instrumental in recalling attention, and for which his memory should be honoured—issuing, as it did, in his sad separation from the church of his fathers, which he dearly loved, from officebearers and members of his flock with whom for years he had lived in unbroken and beautiful harmony, and from the finest Presbyterian place of worship in London, erected specially for himself. Nor is this the place to notice the steps thereafter taken to set up a church upon what he now deemed the Apostolic model—since lapsed, with all its British and Continental branches, into a mongrel Romanism, too sickly to live very long;—or to dwell on the last days of this man, of soul so great as to win the admiration of Coleridge and Carlyle, but unable to control those elements of instability which an acute observer might have traced in him from the first.’

Mr. Brown’s connection with Irving extended over the most exciting period of his career, to the close of

his ministry in Regent Square church. In his papers in the *Expositor* he gives a frank narrative of the occurrences as they came under his own eye, and of their effect on his mind. In a sermon preached before the Continental Society, Irving had propounded his conviction that we were in 'the last days' of the prophetic period, and that the second Advent was at hand. He attended the meetings of the students of prophecy held at Albury Park, the magnificent residence of Mr. Henry Drummond, M.P., at one of which Mr. Brown himself was present, and in regard to which he could not but remark how ill furnished its members were with any sound principles of Biblical interpretation. While Irving was becoming more and more pronounced in his expectation of the second Advent, and the probability that the signs and wonders that were to precede it would now be realised, he was also committing himself publicly to those views of our Lord's human nature which more closely touched his orthodoxy. In 1830 he published his *Discourses on the Incarnation*. Dr. Brown says, 'Until late in 1830, I never saw these discourses, and as his whole teaching convinced me that to him at least our Lord was absolutely spotless and very dear, I let the whole subject alone, until the publication of a pamphlet entitled, *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of our Lord's Human Nature*, which was filling all Scotland with alarm, forced me to go into it. With what impressions I first read that pamphlet I cannot now recall. I had not the self-reliance of my predecessor, Mr. A. J. Scott, who had only too much of it, and I suppose I was neither prepared to challenge his views, nor, on

the other hand, to concede what might have to be retracted.' When Mr. Irving asked Mr. Brown whether in his opinion we might not look for the renewal of those gifts of the Holy Spirit which were enjoyed by the primitive church, his answer was, that there was no clear evidence that they had been finally withdrawn. Mr. Brown at this time expected the second Advent to be pre-millennial, but not to be so near as Mr. Irving supposed. At the same time, if Mr. Irving was right, it was clear that Christendom was ill-prepared for the Advent, and would need to be roused by other means than then appeared; and who could say but that the appearance of signs and wonders might be one of the means by which the necessary warnings would reach even the deaf?

It would be tedious at this time of day to detail all the steps by which practical effect was given to this belief in Regent Square church. The first public manifestation occurred one evening (after a communion service) while Mr. Brown was preaching. It was the time of the cholera, when the community was much excited, and Mr. Brown threw out a hint that there might be some way in preparation for giving to the divine message a power which it did not then possess. On this Mr. Robert Baxter cried out, 'The spiritual ministry, the spiritual ministry!'¹ Other interruptions occurred. Instead of discouraging these, Mr. Irving rejoiced in them. In a letter to Mr. M.

¹ Mr. Baxter became the head of the well-known firm of parliamentary solicitors, Baxter, Rose, and Norton. He was a man of great ability, and though at first a strong supporter of Irving, he afterwards, partly it is believed under the influence of Mr. Brown, who was his intimate friend, wholly renounced his views.

Norman Macdonald, father of the present Lord Justice-Clerk of Scotland, he said that Mr. Brown had on that occasion preached a noble sermon, and twice had the Spirit broken forth—once in support of the truth that the cholera was a judgment of God, and once in rebuke of scoffers. By and by matters assumed a graver aspect. Mr. Baxter gave utterance to sentiments that shocked many, and committed himself to predictions which were not fulfilled. And among those who professed to be organs of the Spirit were some whose actions were most suspicious. Mr. Irving was unshaken in his convictions, but Mr. Brown came to the conclusion that the ‘manifestations’ had nothing in them supernatural or divine. At first he had suspended his judgment, waiting for decisive evidence; now he got decisive evidence that they were not from God. As soon as this conviction was reached, he felt it his duty to make it known to Mr. Irving, and to retire from his office of assistant. With great reluctance he communicated his decision, but indirectly, to Mr. Irving. Meanwhile it came out by his own confession that Mr. Baxter of Doncaster was of the same mind; he acknowledged that he had been mistaken, and now wished to repudiate the whole movement. When Mr. Irving and Mr. Brown met, Mr. Irving, after an interval of silence, said, ‘Well, Mr. Brown, you have left us.’ ‘Yes, Mr. Irving; but not, as you know, while there was any shadow of ground to think that this work was divine.’ After a moment’s pause, as if to think whether he would enter with me on the subject, or break it off at once, he said, with a good deal of suppressed feeling, ‘Your intellect, sir, has destroyed

you.' 'Yes, sir, I confess it; my intellect has done the deed, whatever that may mean: I am responsible for the use of my intellect, and I have used it.' 'With his hand held to mine, and mine warmly grasping his, he left me, my feelings very acute, and his, I am sure, the same. And thus ended my connection with this grand man, whose name can never be uttered in my hearing without a feeling of mingled love and reverence arising within me.'

Mr. Brown never showed or felt any sympathy with Mr. Irving's peculiar view of our Lord's human nature. All that can be said of him in that connection is, that he avoided the subject, being convinced that personally Mr. Irving believed profoundly in the perfect holiness of the Saviour, and having no taste for a discussion that turned on an unthinkable distinction between a man's nature and his personality, as if there might be in the nature qualities that were absent in the person. But with regard to the manifestations, Dr. Brown says his attitude was that of waiting. At first he was neither for nor against. But he was so far *for* that he conceived it possible that on the eve of the second Advent miraculous powers would be conferred, in order to rouse a slumbering church and a slumbering world, like the cry which awoke the virgins in the parable: 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh!' When Mr. Irving declared that the manifestations had begun, both in London and on the shore of the Gareloch in Scotland, Mr. Brown carefully examined the evidence, and found it wanting. Then, at a great cost of feeling, he severed himself from the man whom, of all living men, he honoured most, and whose noble character, fearless

courage, and self-denying zeal seemed to place him among the very foremost servants of his Lord on earth. It can be little wonder that he went so far with Mr. Irving. He had been deeply impressed with Irving's most wholesome teaching on the subject of the Holy Spirit generally—had felt that nothing short of His life-giving breath, coming, as in the valley of vision, from the four winds, could animate the dry bones that lay around on every side, very many and very dry. If the Lord was about to appear, why should not the Spirit come with such power that the experience of Corinth should be renewed? We must allow something, too, for the personal magnetism of Mr. Irving, and the great influence he had gained over him. On the whole it is less surprising that Mr. Brown should have gone so far as he did, than that he should so resolutely have drawn back. We seem to see the divine arm stretched out to restrain him, and to hear the divine interdict, 'Hitherto, but no further.'

It is impossible to obtain direct testimony, after the lapse of nearly sixty-eight years, as to the manner in which Mr. Brown discharged his pulpit duties in Regent Square church, and the impression he made on the people. But there is every reason to believe that the impression was highly favourable. Hard though it was to stand side by side with an orator of the highest rank, he appears to have borne the ordeal as few young men could have done. It is certain that Mr. Irving thought very highly of him, and that on particular occasions when he was called unexpectedly to take his place, he acquitted himself brilliantly.

And the fact that he retained the office for the long period of two years and four months, and that his resignation was wholly his own act, without a hint of dissatisfaction either from pastor or people, shows that he must have proved himself equal to the occasion, due allowance being made for what was inevitable in the case of a young man.

It would be interesting to trace the effects of Mr. Brown's intercourse with Mr. Irving, as shown in his subsequent career. Among these we should find, first of all, a new or at least a greatly increased love for Biblical study, but not the kind of study that lies at the mercy of loose or fantastical rules, which was too much Mr. Irving's on prophetic subjects; rather that which recognises a plan and method in divine revelation, and seeks carefully and laboriously to ascertain the principles on which the whole volume of Scripture is to become our counsellor and guide. Mr. Brown at first agreed with Mr. Irving in the belief that the second Advent would be pre-millennial; indeed, in a theological society in his student days, he had read a paper maintaining that position; but the more careful and connected study of the subject to which he was led compelled him to abandon that view, and laid the foundation of what he afterwards wrote on the subject, no doubt to the disappointment of many friends, but with remarkable firmness of tread and clearness of exposition. Then, moreover, we should find his ideas of the Christian ministry much elevated, and, we may say, ennobled; a higher conception formed of what it was to be an ambassador for Christ, appointed to beseech men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, and a larger

share attained of the frankness, courage, and fervour with which this high office should be discharged. The honesty, transparency, and guilelessness that all along marked Mr. Brown's character may have already existed, but they could hardly fail to be confirmed by the example of Mr. Irving. And, though he was no copyist of Mr. Irving's quaint, archaic style, and no pretender to the commanding attitude which his noble form and voice made not unnatural for him, he might at least learn from him a new lesson on the power of language, and be helped to that clear, idiomatic, and very successful style which marked his writings. From the beginning Mr. Irving's defects were not unobserved, and when the connection terminated, they had become beacons to warn. So that whatever he may have lost by his connection with Irving, the gain beyond doubt was far greater.

In one sense, however, he lost very materially; for, when he returned to Scotland, he found a suspicion attached to him which clouded his prospects for many a day. When one has committed an error, the public are sure to exaggerate it; and the degree in which Mr. Brown had sympathised with Mr. Irving in his expectation of miracles was so magnified, that he was looked on by many as one whose judgment could not be trusted, and who could hardly be recommended as a capable minister. This was all the more trying that he had already been engaged for four years to his cousin, Catharine Dyce of Aberdeen. It is interesting to inquire how his own spirit was exercised under this unlooked-for and protracted stoppage, and happily we are able to get light on that question.

For a considerable part of the time, he was assistant to the parish minister of Dumbarton, and a few of the letters which he wrote to his mother then have been found. The discipline was hard and trying; but the spirit in which it was borne was admirable.

He devoted himself with great diligence to the duties of the Dumbarton assistantship. The minister of the parish did not bear a high reputation, and Mr. Brown found it desirable for the sake of example to practise total abstinence while labouring there. An evening service was begun—a thing previously unknown; pastoral visitation was prosecuted diligently, and Bible classes were opened both for young men and young women. The late Mr. Peter Denny, the eminent ship-builder, after himself attaining a venerable age, used playfully to speak of himself as one of Dr. Brown's 'young men.' In order to enlarge their minds, he gave a course of lectures on astronomy, perhaps in imitation of Dr. Chalmers when he lectured on chemistry, but with a much more directly Christian aim.¹

But perhaps the chief influence of Dr. Brown came from his ordinary sermons. Arresting, earnest, and spiritual, and delivered with much fervour and animation, they made a great impression, and gained for him the reputation of a powerful evangelical preacher.

Some of the previous ministers of Dumbarton had been faithful and earnest servants of their Master, and vestiges of their work remained; but as a whole he found the people very dead, and many who passed for respect-

¹ One or two of these facts I owe to the exertions of my kind friend, Lord Overtoun, who has made inquiries for me from every available source in Dumbarton.

able enough, came only occasionally to church, or once a day, and these alike among the better, middle, and lower classes. 'When I speak to many of them I may as well speak to the wall, as they are either quite insensible, or else hardened Pharisees, and these I find the most impracticable. . . . On the whole, however, I have been well received at their houses, and with scarcely any—I may say no exception, have been asked to renew my visit, so that I shall conciliate them at least before I leave them.'

With regard to his own preaching, his estimate of it was far from high. Referring to some notes which his mother had sent him, of sermons recently heard by her, and which had raised in her a deep sense of unworthiness, he says: 'But oh, my dear mother, if you feel yourself unworthy to sit at the feet of the least of God's saints and servants, and would be glad, as you express it, to get in at the back of them all, what language is fitting for me? If there is any good thing in me towards the Lord God of Israel, which I dare to hope, I can get no mark of it that satisfies my own mind, except that I think the language of my heart to God is that of the Prodigal: "I am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants." Give me the lowest and most unnoticed place in all thy house, and I am content; so I be not utterly rejected, I care not what thou makest of me. . . . Oh, what satisfaction there is in preaching, and indeed in all the services which the ministers of Christ are called to discharge in the sanctuary, when we are able in any measure to forget self in the bad sense, and to remember it in the good sense; to preach not ourselves and yet

to ourselves, to have singleness and purity of aim in addressing souls, and to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God by the noted manifestation of the truth! . . . With all its difficulties and responsibilities I would not exchange this blessed ministry for the most enviable post on earth.'

So far from grieving that he was still but an assistant, he at first rejoiced in it. 'I owe it to the infinite goodness of God to-day that though I naturally desire a permanent sphere of labour, the situation I am now in, so far as I can judge from past experience and present appearances, is that which combines the greatest number of the most important advantages, and if duly improved is most fitted to train me for that usefulness in the church which, unless I deceive myself, is my highest ambition.'

As time went on, however, and disappointment succeeded disappointment, the strain upon his feelings became more intense. His brother Charles, though three years his junior, had been settled before him as successor to Dr. Love, in Anderston Chapel, Glasgow; but so far from this exciting any envious feeling, it was hailed with delight. It was looked on as a specially bright spot in his providential history that they would be so near each other, and would be able to render one another assistance, especially at communion times. Some time after, it seemed not unlikely that Charles would be appointed minister of St. Andrew's parish, Glasgow, and if so, it was a moral certainty that David would succeed him at Anderston. But instead of Charles Brown, Mr. Paterson of Galashiels, the well-known author of the *Manse Garden*, was appointed to St.

Andrew's Church; yet David Brown's serenity remained undisturbed. He writes to his mother: 'So Charles is finally out of St. Andrew's. I have no doubt it is for his good, and I hope not to that people's loss, though to the Anderston people his removal would have been, I say not an irreparable, but a most severe loss. You may think his remaining in Anderston a disappointment to me, as he talks of my being called to succeed him as a moral certainty. But though you may think me crotchety, the truth is that I cannot help deprecating that event. It would be ridiculous to suppose that in the event of my going to Anderston, the people would not make comparisons, and that these would be equally agreeable to both of us, and I sufficiently feel, I assure you, what sort of comparison would be made, to make me far from desirous to go there.'

There was some hope of his being appointed to Liberton. 'But it would take a good deal to make me sanguine about this or any other church to which I have not actually a presentation. I don't think I repine at what has happened to me, and if I am "in heaviness," I hope it is of that kind which we have good authority for believing to be needful for a season. Were I as sure that all is right with myself as I am that the Judge of all the earth will do rightly, I should feel more easy. However, I have abundant reason to be thankful, and one benefit which I may sensibly derive from the trials I experience, is a power to speak to others in like circumstances, which I find becomes more manifest to myself the more deeply I myself am afflicted. You may wonder at my speaking in this way, considering that I am in a sphere of

labour and usefulness. But no one can enter into my feelings on this head but myself alone. Bodily trials, though serious, would not, I have good reason to think, affect me nearly so much, and it seems just because this particular mode of chastisement is to me the severest that it has been sent. And feeling it sometimes very deeply, I am enabled to sympathise and speak home in similar cases in a way which to myself is very comforting.'

If David felt keenly his failure to obtain a permanent settlement, his brother Charles felt it, if possible, still more. No two brothers could have had a warmer affection for each other, or a higher appreciation of each other's gifts, different in many ways though they were. Writing to his mother about the time when David went to Dumbarton, he said: 'It is really wonderful the deep impression that David's preaching has made on those here (Glasgow) who have heard him. I think he will not be long of being in a more important station. It will in the meantime be pleasant and profitable to us both to be settled so near each other.' About a year later, Charles writes of the deep impression which David had again made. 'He has not got his singular gifts and graces for nothing. He ripens every day, I do not mean for heaven merely, but for usefulness on earth.' Still later he writes when his time at Dumbarton came to an end: 'Poor David! However, there is no fear of him—a little time and patience, that is all. He was up with me on Sabbath, preaching a glorious sermon. He still improves greatly, particularly in animation and loudness of voice. It was truly a feast to me. Mr. Wright thinks he will

get one of these new churches, if not previously presented. The testimonial from Dumbarton was worth his whole stay there.'

Charles wrote to his mother that there was something absolutely mysterious in David's having to go home once more, high and dry. The fact called for that profound exercise of submission that was incumbent on us under God's most inscrutable judgments. What could be the cause? How was it that men immeasurably inferior to him were preferred? Charles owns that he had often felt it difficult to avoid the guilt of charging Providence with inequality. But 'God was His own Interpreter, and He would make it plain.' 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'

Amid all his pastoral diligence, David Brown did not forget his studies. He had taken some books with him to Dumbarton, but he writes to his mother for more. First, he mentions a batch on practical religion, including Brown of Wamphray on *Prayer*. Then all his German books, including particularly a German Bible and a German Dictionary, as he has promised to give a young friend lessons in German. His French Dictionary too. Keith on *Prophecy* he particularly desires, and three volumes of Mr. Irving's *Sermons*. Also De Moor's *Commentary on Marck's Compendium of Theology*, in seven quarto Latin volumes. Grotius, in four volumes folio would be too much of a good thing, for it would fill up the box, but Zanchius in two folios he would fain have. And if the box be large enough, his mother might slip in Irenæus and Cyprian. If he was

so full of his books while he was in the constant whirl of pastoral work, we may be sure that he would make still more of them in those intervals when he had no stated engagement. When at last a door opened for his entrance on the regular ministry, few men could have been in possession of so rich and varied furniture for the work. His intellectual and his spiritual progress had gone on apace ; between the great metropolis, his native city, and the county town of Dumbarton, he had seen a good deal of the world ; he had acquired a practical acquaintance with the work of the ministry which would save him from the blunders of the beginner ; and all his experience had shown him where he was to find the secret of strength, the wisdom to direct, and the grace to help and cheer him in time of need.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORD

‘NEAR the entrance of the Moray Firth, where the Scottish coast, after running far in a north-easterly direction, trends westward, opening its bosom wide to the German Ocean, stands the ancient county town of Banff. At the distance of six miles south-west of that town the parish of that name terminates in a bleak district, some hundred feet above the level of the sea, called doubtless from its elevation, “The Ord.”¹ Here in the year 1834-35 a district church was erected to accommodate the extremities of four surrounding parishes [Banff, Ordiquhill, Alvah, and Marnoch], and close by the church was built a manse. Of this church the writer was the first minister.’

So wrote Dr. Brown in the first page of a memoir of his eldest son, of which we shall have more to say afterwards. It was but a country chapel, and of all kinds of churches, the country chapel is the hardest to maintain, where there are no rich men to take the burden. The stipend was miserable, not exceeding a hundred pounds per annum, and the neighbourhood of

¹ Some authorities say it means ‘The Hammer,’ but that it is applied to any projection outward or upward. Others consider it a corruption of Aird, which signifies ‘high.’

the manse was bare and desolate, with no feature to charm the eye or captivate the heart. The social standing of a chapel minister was inferior to that of the endowed clergy, so that in a worldly point of view the position was poor enough. David Brown's friends would never have consented to his going there but for the feeling that it was necessary for him to begin in some quiet place in order to efface the unfavourable influence of his connection with Edward Irving. They knew that a man of his gifts and culture was fitted for a very different sphere, and, below their breath at least, they would say that he would be thrown away upon the Ord, if it had not been that he must get his feet somehow on the first step of the ladder in order to climb higher afterwards. But no inkling of discontented feeling was to be gathered from himself. He buckled to his work with as much heartiness as he had addressed himself to his duties in Regent Square. It was the sphere to which his Master had called him, and with that thought he composed his mind. He was ordained 17th November 1836.

The Ord congregation consisted mainly, as Banffshire congregations generally do, of small farmers and labourers, most of whom had received the education of the parish school, and were generally of very plain manners, but intelligent and industrious. The place had all the features of a neglected district. In the beginning of the century the ministers of all the neighbouring parishes had been of the 'moderate' school, and though recently some excellent men had been settled, conspicuous among whom was the Rev. F. W. Grant of Banff, whose earnest and powerful

preaching and amiable character had brought much good to that town, the Ord was too far off to be much influenced by him, and the leaven of moderatism still remained. The object of the moderate minister had been, in an easy way, to make the people moral, honest, and neighbourly. Mr. Brown's trumpet gave forth a very different sound. He came with the message of reconciliation for men lost by sin; and, as in many similar cases, there was something so glorious in his message, and so attractive in the fervour with which it was delivered, that the people heard him gladly.

Besides that, the air was tingling with ecclesiastical commotion. The conflict between the church and the civil courts had begun. The district of Ord included part of the parish of Marnoch, where the working of patronage was soon after exemplified in its most atrocious and exasperating form. The intrusion of Mr. Edwards into that parish, against the unanimous voice of the people (the only man that signed his call was a publican); his pretended ordination by suspended ministers, amid the protests of the people and the howls of a mob who had rushed into the church when the people left; and the horrible profanity of his ordination vow, that 'zeal for the glory of God, love of Christ, and desire of saving souls were his great reasons for accepting his call, and not worldly motives or inducements,' stirred the heart of Scotland as it had not been stirred for ages, and contributed more to the prosperity of the 'non-intrusion' cause than hundreds of speeches or Assembly debates. The volcano that burst at Marnoch could not but agitate the Ord with its strongest impulses, and draw the people into in-

tensely active sympathy with the popular cause. Roused from their ordinary sluggishness, their minds became more sensitive to church matters generally, and more susceptible of spiritual impressions. It is commonly thought that times of religious conflict are not favourable to spiritual prosperity, and when the din of battle is loud, men naturally sigh for the peace that seems so much more favourable to a spiritual harvest. Of course, it is to be conceded that a time of controversy is liable to many evils, but there are some compensations too. For, just as in the case of persons partially deaf the rattle of a carriage seems to rouse the aural nerve into unwonted activity, so the commotion of religious controversy may quicken the spiritual sense, and rouse the soul from that insensibility which is ever the most hopeless condition of a people needing to be converted. Especially when the controversy is in close relation to vital truths. In the present case, it was not merely the rights of the people that were involved, but the authority and glory of Christ as Head of the Church. And the authority of Christ as Head of the Church at large had a very close relation to the right of Christ to reign over each individual soul, and the obligation of the individual soul to receive Him. People were brought into very close contact with the supremacy of Christ, and in many cases their consciences were exercised by the question, whether in contending for His universal authority over the church and over the world, they were giving Him His due allegiance in their own special domain.

On the whole, it was rather a benefit than the reverse for Mr. Brown to begin his ministry while the

air was full of the church controversy. It was a time of much perplexity, when the need of divine guidance was most powerfully felt, and over the whole church devout hearts without number were constantly imploring the divine guidance and blessing, and pleading for the ministers not only that they might be strengthened for their coming trial, but that they might be singularly blessed in their whole work for their Master.

I am indebted to the Rev. G. G. Macdonald, of the Free Church of Cornhill, virtually a successor of Dr. Brown, for some interesting notes of his work at the Ord, gathered from the reminiscences of people still alive, the most important of which I will incorporate with my own narrative.

‘Brown o’ the Ord,’ or, as his name was more frequently pronounced, ‘Broon o’ the Ord,’ soon became a household word, not only in the lower part of Banffshire, but in a portion of Aberdeenshire too. As a faithful pastor, an able divine, and a popular preacher, his fame spread far beyond the immediate sphere of his labour, and his praise was soon in all the churches.

His appearance was youthful and engaging. He was about the middle height, but full of agility and activity. His dark-brown hair, regular features, ample forehead, and beautiful brown eyes made him, to the great delight of the female portion of his congregation, what they called ‘a bonnie minister.’ As one of his flock remarked, it were well ‘that all ministers were bonnie as well as gude, when their people have to look so much at them.’

‘Gratior est virtus veniens e corpore pulchro.’

His manner was winsome and affable. There being no manse at first, he had to board with one of his people, who used to accommodate him with the use of a farm horse when he had to go to a distance. Scottish ministers have not the reputation of being good horsemen, and Mr. Brown was no exception. He used to ride at great speed, and when on one occasion coming down a steep brae, the horse fell, and he was thrown over his head and broke his arm, the farmers said it was a judgment for driving like Jehu, and thereafter the minister became more canny.

A small manse was built the year after his settlement. It was only a little before that he had been able to fulfil his long engagement by marrying his cousin, Catharine Dyce. She was the daughter of Dr. William Dyce, a prominent physician in Aberdeen, and of Margaret Chalmers, the sister of Mrs. Brown, senior. Among the members of her family was William Dyce, the celebrated painter, always a great friend of David Brown's, of whom we shall have more to say hereafter.

The union with Catharine Dyce was one of great happiness. Besides being an earnest Christian, she was a lady of great mental vigour and many accomplishments, well fitted to be the companion of an intellectual Christian minister. Her musical gifts were of so high an order that, in the memoir of his son, Dr. Brown could say that 'from childhood he had been accustomed to hear some of the best music of the German and Italian masters, secular and sacred, together with the best of our own music.' To this both parents contributed; as Professor Salmond said of Dr. Brown, in an obituary notice, 'He had a fine musical taste, a nice ear

for melody, and a quick sense of musical style.' And never were two lives more closely blended. In all his occupations, public, pastoral, and literary, she was his confidant and his counsellor. But, so far as known to the present writer, not a scrap of writing from the one to the other now survives. It will be impossible, therefore, to convey the impression of her constant influence; to show how 'the idea of her life' mingled with his; how it kept the stream of cheerfulness in constant motion, helped his spiritual progress, brightened his joys, and soothed his sorrows. The biographer can do little more than record the fact, and ask the reader as he goes along to bear it in mind, and to remember that for many years his work was the product of two lives so blended that nothing undertaken by the one was accomplished without the other.

He often reverted in later years to the joy of his espousals, for he was not a man to conceal his warm emotions, or to be ashamed of them. The manse life at the Ord, where most of his children were born, was not only a very bright reminiscence to his family in after years, but drew the interest of visitors, and lived in their hearts ever after. Dr. Brown himself used to speak of this as the happiest period of his life. This was all the more remarkable because the struggle to live was incessant. What made this time so bright was his joy in his family and his joy in his work. The people were for the most part poor, and though he enjoyed the friendship of some of the upper class who lived not far off, this could do but little for his material comfort. Sir Robert and Lady Abercromby of Forglen had a great love and esteem for him, and so had

the then Earl of Seafield. To Lady Abercromby he was useful in the highest sense, as her deathbed testified. The Duchess of Gordon invited him to her meetings for religious conference at Huntly Lodge, greatly pleased both with his character and his gentlemanly bearing, and there were others of that class with whom he was on friendly terms. In the Presbytery he had some very congenial neighbours, especially Mr. Grant of Banff, Mr. Reid of Portsoy, Mr. Anderson of Boyndie, and, in the neighbouring Presbytery of Turriff, Mr. Thorburn of Forglen. Mr. Thorburn, who was Mr. Brown's brother-in-law, was one of the ablest men and most powerful preachers of his day. He was a man of fearless courage, a sort of John the Baptist, who by his faithfulness to the great showed that he did not fear the face of clay. Otherwise he was warm-hearted, affable, and of easy address. He had a great moral and spiritual influence in the neighbourhood, and had been useful to some of his brethren, at first inclined to the moderate school. After the Disruption he became minister of the Free High Church of Inverness, and died early. But Mr. Brown's great and abiding joy was that God was blessing his house and his people.

While very careful of the young of his flock, Mr. Brown was particularly alive to the case of young communicants. He took the greatest pains in instructing the catechumens, and impressing on them their great responsibility when they joined the church. Some of these yet survive, and they retain a vivid recollection of his pains and prayers on their behalf. Part of the Shorter Catechism was his manual of

instruction, especially the questions bearing on the person and work of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. Attendance at a single term of the class did not content him; he used to press on them to give a second, or even a third, attendance. One who still survives, Mr. John Morrison, Mill of Boyndie, in a letter containing a detailed account of the communicants' class, concludes thus: 'The most solemn and testing part of all the course was Mr. Brown taking us one by one into his study, and with Christ-like tenderness asking us pointedly as to how it was between God and our souls. And there, on his bended knees, he poured out his soul before God on our behalf, which left impressions yet fresh on some minds.'

On one occasion a very ignorant ploughman had presented himself, and Mr. Brown, not feeling satisfied, urged the man to wait for another season, which he was not very willing to do. He knew that his fellow-servants would taunt him with his not being admitted, as indeed they did soon, telling him how easily they themselves had got through. When he met Mr. Brown afterwards, he told him what they said to him. 'And what,' asked Mr. Brown, 'did you say to them?' 'I jist tauld them that ae admission at the Ord was worth ten at Beenie.'

In his parish there lived an old Highlander, Donald Macdonald, full of the Highland prejudice on the subject of the communion. He was a good man, and had led a consistent life, yet Mr. Brown could not overcome his difficulties. 'She'll no ken the English,' observed Donald. 'But, Donald, the Lord knows Gaelic, and you'll just use the Gaelic words

when you communicate.' 'I never thought o' that,' quoth Donald, 'and I'll just dae it.'

On occasion of one of his more recent visits to his old place, the Rev. Mr. Macdonald took him to see an old member who dearly cherished his memory. They sat side by side and hand in hand on the sofa, and the following was the dialogue—

'Ay, Annie, you remember me at the Ord; I am sure I remember you.'

'Remember you? Ay, and ever will through all eternity. Ye war the means o' makin' a gey change on my life, for I got a new life under your ministry.'

'Do you tell me that, Annie? Well, it pleases me more than thousands of gold or silver.'

'I'll never forget that communion season, Mr. Brown, never in time or eternity. I remember the vera words that made me feel that I needed a great change if I was to be one of Christ's people.'

'What were they, Annie? This is indeed very refreshing to me,' he said, grasping her hand affectionately.

'Well, you were speakin' upon "He feedeth among the lilies"; and you put the question, "But, my friends, are you all His lilies?" I felt in my heart that I was not. I went home, and could get no sleep or peace night or day. I was miserable all that week till Wednesday, when I resolved to go to your prayer-meeting, tho' I had great difficulty to get away. But I soon tramped the three miles by the nearest cuts through the fields, and I got my errand that night, and my life has been changed ever since. So you see, dear Mr. Brown, I could never forget you.' The tears

were rolling down her cheeks, and the doctor, with moist eyes, kissing the old woman, said with quivering voice, 'Dear Annie, I have often wondered whether I did any good at the Ord, but this is an evidence that indeed makes my heart glad, and I thank God for it.'

'Ay, and ye hae done gude to many besides me, I assure you.'

'I am so glad to hear you say it. Well do I remember you and all your kindness to me at the Disruption when I came to Cornhill.' The two parted with affection, and in the hope of meeting where there is no separation.

This 'Annie,' writes Mr. Macdonald, 'is Widow Smith, one of the most beautiful Christian characters I ever met; and, like the doctor himself, in old age seems to grow in personal beauty as she ripens for glory. She has been a most noble and consistent witness for Christ, and by her prayers and with her means she has done what she could for the furtherance of His kingdom.'

Another instance of bread cast upon the waters being found after many days occurred incidentally in the village of Turriff (not far from the Ord) in the year 1886. 'As I was hurrying to the train, after having been assisting a neighbouring minister (wrote Dr. Brown), a person accosted me on the street in Turriff, and said, "O Dr. Brown, I must get a shake of your hand, for you are my spiritual father." "How so?" I said. "In the year of the Disruption you preached for Mr. Thorburn after he came out, and he had no place but Turriff to preach in, and you preached on 'We are not ignorant of his devices.' You

described me so clearly that I was quite angry, but before you had done I was in Christ.”’

This man, a farmer in the neighbourhood, is a respected elder in the Free Church.

While Mr. Brown was thus prosecuting his parochial labours, and enjoying these tokens of the divine blessing, the conflict between the civil and church courts was raging with the utmost vehemence. The civil courts had declared the veto law to be *ultra vires*, and were now commanding the church courts to disregard it, and settle ministers, whether the people objected or no. For himself, after the veto had been declared illegal, he would rather that the church had fallen on some other way of giving effect to the voice of the people. But it was clear to him as day that in resisting the claims of the civil courts to overrule, and in certain cases reverse her whole procedure, the church was acting not only warrantably but nobly. As to the issue of the conflict, it seemed to him certain that the church would be overborne. Lord Aberdeen might have arranged a settlement, and his proposals would have been accepted, though reluctantly, had he stuck to what it was believed that he originally proposed. In the following extract from a letter to his mother, July 1, 1840, three years before the Disruption, Mr. Brown expresses himself pretty strongly against Lord Aberdeen, but it is only fair to say that his Lordship warmly repudiated the charge which he brings against him. The subject gave rise to a hot personal controversy, the particulars of which will be found in a correspondence between Lord Aberdeen and Dr. Chalmers, in Hanna's *Life of Chalmers*.

‘I have now the darkest possible opinion of the prospects of the church. There is now, so far as I can see, not a vestige of ground to hope for anything satisfactory from Parliament. Government and the Whigs cannot help us; Lord Aberdeen and the Tories will not. Two things will prevent Lord Aberdeen from yielding now one jot. First, he has gone back from what he gave the non-intrusion committee ground to believe he would concede to them, for it is clear as day that his Bill is a breach of the virtual engagement which his published correspondence implied. Witness his telling the committee that the rejection of a man because of the redness of his hair would by his Bill be upheld and be final, if sanctioned by the supreme ecclesiastical court, and then saying in the House of Lords that it never was his intention to protect the church courts against having their decisions reviewed and reversed by the civil, in the event of their rejecting on grounds not legally recognised. . . . But another thing will clench this determination to abide where he is, and concede nothing to the church. The proud spirit of the peer is chafed by the way in which the assembly threw his Bill overboard. He evidently had not been prepared for this. . . . And none can read his speech, either on the second reading of his Bill, or in presenting the petition of the seven suspended, without seeing the choleric tone into which he has been thrown. It is impossible to account for the contemptuous way in which he sneers at the firmness of the Assembly, the dishonesty which he actually imputes to the committee, the pretended superiority which he expresses in reference to his Bill, and, above all, the low and unworthy revenge which he displays in speaking of the pleasure it would give him to see some of the ministers imprisoned. It is not easy to account for all this from a man hitherto thought too calm and unimpassioned, characterised by dignity and gravity, elegance and grace, save on the

supposition that he spoke in a towering passion, which it needed all his philosophy and policy to keep in bounds.'

When Lord Aberdeen got into this temper, all hope of settlement virtually disappeared. Between 1840 and 1843 many attempts were made, but all in vain. The prospect of ejection was not so grievous for Mr. Brown as for the endowed clergy, for in point of income he could hardly be worse than he was. But Mr. Brown had never ceased to hope for a parish church; and now that he was committed, heart and hand, to the rebels, as they were called; now that he had broken an interdict of the Court of Session by preaching in Strathbogie, and had become liable to imprisonment, there was hardly a chance of any patron looking at him, so that, if a settlement of the church question should occur, his prospects were still blighted. And if a disruption should take place, all was uncertain as to his case. But he went forward steadily. He attended the Convocation of Ministers in November 1842, and adhered to the resolutions then passed, in which some four hundred ministers pledged themselves to separate from the state in the event of no measure being passed for the protection of the church and the people.

After the Convocation he took a step which he could not have ventured on previously. After preaching in the mornings at the Ord, he now preached in the afternoons in the village of Cornhill, within the bounds of a neighbouring minister. This minister was thoroughly opposed to the reforming party in the church; and as no site for a Free Church could have been got at the Ord, and it was likely that it would have to be built

at Cornhill, three and a half miles off, it seemed very desirable to prepare for that step. A large congregation gathered at the place of meeting, for both ministers and people were solemnised by the position of the church. The power of the Holy Ghost seemed to be exerted in an unusual degree, sending home the appeals of the preacher to many hearts. Yet obstacles were thrown in the way. When the meetings were held in the large room of the inn, an interdict was procured by the proprietor against such meetings. When the interdict came to be enforced, it was a wet and windy night; but, with the help of candles and lanterns, it was resolved to hold the meeting outside. To the amazement of many the wind fell and the rain ceased, as if Providence had interposed; when the Cornhill friends thus seemed to have the favour of God, they thought less of the opposition of men. Mr. Brown was felt to be a tower of strength to the cause of the church, not only in his own parish, but throughout the whole district. And wherever he went and spoke, it was made plain that, much though he was concerned for the safety of the church, what lay nearest to his heart was the spiritual welfare of the people, and that his strongest and most pathetic appeals were on this behalf, that they might turn to God and live.

In some papers, entitled, 'Personal Reminiscences of the Ten Years' Conflict,'¹ Dr. Brown, when in his ninetieth year, recorded not a few of the characteristic occurrences of this exciting period. The power of memory shown in these papers is extraordinary. Active, popular, and very cordial in the cause, he was

¹ See *Youth*, Jan., Feb., March, April 1895 (T. Nelson and Sons).

much engaged going from place to place to expound the situation to the people, or to converse with friends as to their course in the future. In both classes he saw not a little of human nature in its strength and in its weakness. The worldly minded could neither believe that the ministers would make the sacrifice, nor that the people would draw their purses. In one case a minister, fully purposed to 'go out,' had sent for an auctioneer to arrange for the sale of his furniture. The auctioneer could not believe him serious; and when he saw that he was, he shrank from the job, because he, as well as the minister, would be sure to be laughed at by an incredulous public. But the sale was advertised, and it deeply impressed a half-infidel man in the parish, who confessed that, after all, there must be something in religion, for Mr. A. was 'rouping his furniture.' On one occasion, when Mr. Brown was dining with the members of a Presbytery, some discussion took place as to the number of large farmers that would 'come out' in each parish. One minister said, 'There's not one of my big farmers who would not turn a Mohammedan to-morrow if you would lower his rent five pounds.' He was wrong; several of them came out. No class of men cut a more pitiable figure than those ministers who had contended for the principles, but could not face the sacrifice. Sometimes they acted with inconceivable meanness, applying for the livings vacated by their more consistent brethren, even though they had been personal friends. Few of these men were able to hold up their heads after such exhibitions of their weakness. Some of them had recourse to the bottle to

keep up their spirits. On the other hand, the steadfastness of the true men, and of the wives of the true men, to their principles, in spite of overwhelming difficulties and apparent disaster of every kind, was indeed heroic.

On the memorable 18th of May 1843 Mr. Brown was in Edinburgh, and, as one of the 474, cordially attached his name to the Deed of Demission. Returning to the Ord, he had a very blank prospect to face. Lord Seafield sent, though reluctantly, for the key of the church and the manse—a plain proof that Mr. Brown's connection with both was to cease. Hardly less was it an indication that Cullen House and Forglen House (Sir Robert Abercromby's) would no longer have their doors open to him as before. These landed men were strong Conservatives, and bitterly opposed to the church. No doubt Mr. Brown would have braced himself for the new situation, and faced its difficulties as before. All his elders and nearly the whole congregation came out along with him. But, as it turned out, it was not he that was to fight that battle. In the course of the autumn a call came to him from an important congregation in Glasgow that had come out, but left their minister behind. It cost him a wrench to leave the place which had so many sweet associations, where his work had been so blessed, where he had spent the first bright years of wedded life, and where most of his children had been born. But it was so apparent that in his new sphere he would be the right man in the right place, that the translation took place, much as a matter of course, and his sphere was transferred from

the Moray Firth to the banks of the Clyde. 'Broon o' the Ord' became a tradition of the past.

The after-visits of one who had made such a deep impression were hailed very cordially by the people. The Free Church had been transferred to Cornhill, and his old church and manse remained connected with the Established Church. When he visited them, some five-and-twenty years ago, along with Mr. Macdonald, he could look on them only with tearful eyes. When Mr. Macdonald was introduced by him to his people, he preached stirring sermons, full of memories of the past. About ten years ago a preaching hall, connected with the Free Church, was provided for the Ord district, which he opened, much to the delight of the people. It was regarded as the celebration of his jubilee, and he was presented with an illuminated address from the officebearers and congregation.

His last visit was on the occasion of the jubilee of the Free Church of Marnoch (at Aberchirder) in June 1891. He was then in his eighty-seventh year. He gave the congregation of Cornhill an interesting account of his past experiences as a minister. But the most notable incident of this visit took place in the Free Church of Marnoch. It happened that one of those present was the venerable William Stronach of Ardmeallie, who, with Dr. Brown, had also been present in 1841, at the opening of the church. They had never met since. Mr. Stronach had acted a conspicuous and honourable part on the day of the Marnoch intrusion. The seven suspended ministers, helpless and miserable, unable to control the noise of the crowd that refused all tokens of reverence to an act of

desecration, had called on Mr. Stronach, as a justice of the peace, to give them some help, complaining that they were interrupted and deforced by parishioners of Marnoch. The Marnoch people had left the church in a body, and Mr. Stronach now strongly appealed to any that might have remained to leave it at once. When all had left, and it became plain that not one of the people over whom Mr. Edwards was to be nominally ordained was present, Mr. Stronach had called on the Presbytery to do their work and be as quick as possible. He had gained golden opinions on that day for his mingled firmness and courtesy. When the venerable Principal shook hands with his old friend, almost a nonagenarian like himself, and called to mind his high character and his memorable services, not then only but throughout his long connection with the parish and congregation, he was so moved that in presence of all the people he took him into his arms and kissed him. The spectacle was as touching as it was rare.

CHAPTER V

GLASGOW MINISTRY

THE congregation of St. James's Free Church, of which Mr. Brown now became minister, had been formed under unusual circumstances. Dr. John Muir, who had been minister of the Established Church of that parish for some time before, was an ardent evangelical, a man of strong individuality, almost eccentricity, and a vehement Tory. He had an intense abhorrence of Catholic Emancipation, believing that it must sap the Protestant foundation of the Empire; after it became law, the country appeared to him to be ruined, so that it was needless to contend for other things; having swallowed the camel, it was needless to strain out the gnat. Consequently, when the Disruption took place, he remained in the Established Church. But not so his people. They had appreciated more justly the nature of the struggle, and intuitively apprehended its relation to the cause of the Gospel generally. A large portion of them, including eleven out of twelve elders, proceeded to form themselves into a Free Church congregation. The gentleman who remained in was a Mr. King, father of the present Sir James King. The elders were a peculiarly fine body of men, combining the commercial enterprise of

Glasgow merchants with the Christian fervour of Dr. Chalmers—‘not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’ Having had their attention called to Mr. David Brown, who was well known in Glasgow from his having often assisted his brother Charles in Anderston Church, they gave him a cordial call to be their minister. Though very reluctant to leave the Ord, he accepted the call for obvious reasons, and removed to Glasgow in October 1843.

The commencement of his Glasgow ministry took place at a memorable time. The spirit roused by the Disruption was tremendously strong. There was both good and bad in it, the good greatly predominating. Towards the Established Church there was no doubt a great deal of bitter and contemptuous feeling. In that direction, unhappily, people did not seem to feel the need of restraining the natural man. But there was also a spirit of great spiritual earnestness. There was an intense desire that as the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ had been signally vindicated in the public administration of the church, so His claims in other departments of life should be cordially acknowledged, and that thus the ministry might become more signally useful in the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers. Of this spirit a striking manifestation took place at the meeting of the General Assembly in 1844, in connection with which Mr. Brown’s brother, Charles, then minister of the New North Church, Edinburgh, did excellent service. In the ‘Reminiscences of the Ten Years’ Conflict’ already referred to, Mr. D. Brown thus records this event:—

‘When the Assembly met for the second time in

May 1844 (as I have said elsewhere), it was felt by many that after the close of a ten years' conflict, there was great danger of the people settling down, and getting shrivelled up into a mere non-intrusion sect. To avert this danger, a step very unusual was taken. In the second week, my brother, the late Dr. Charles Brown, was asked to preach before the Assembly. This he did on very short notice, and almost extempore, on "the preacher as an ambassador for Christ, beseeching men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God"; and this with such tenderness and melting power, that the members were almost in tears. This was followed up by deputations of two and two to preach in all the congregations of every Presbytery in the church, instructing them to say nothing about funds, nor about our controversy with the Established Church now at an end, but to preach the Gospel pure and simple, and nothing else. At the close of the service, however, they were to invite the officebearers to remain, that they might encourage them in their new work, and ask them how they were getting on.' In this work Mr. David Brown took his part with cheerful ardour. It was a happy idea, and served materially to confirm and advance the spiritual welfare of the church.

It was, moreover, a time of cordial union and brotherly love. Among the ministers of the Free Church themselves, if there were any jealousies or animosities before, they were now at an end. And from all quarters far and near there came the warmest expressions of admiration of the sacrifice that had been made; of sympathy for the troubles and difficulties of the church, and of the desire that in her

future career she might be eminently blessed and her example made useful to the whole Christian world. One of the most striking effects of the Disruption was the cordiality with which the church was greeted by the old secession bodies with whom she had been engaged shortly before in mortal conflict, in connection with the Voluntary Controversy. All the old hostility died out in a moment, and a cordial friendship came in its room. This was the more striking that the ministers of the evangelical party who now formed the Free Church, had been the most active opponents of the voluntaries, for the good-natured, easy-going moderates, although strong for an Established Church, had not been active in the strife. Another happy effect of the Disruption was the eagerness of the people to give help, in whatsoever way they could. Never was the spirit of willing service more cordially shown. Men and women everywhere seemed to hear a trumpet call, summoning them to the field of service. Talents that must otherwise have slept were called into active exercise. And, as on the Day of Pentecost, the opening of men's hearts was accompanied with the opening of their purses; and canny Scotsmen, proverbial for their great care of their money, sent it in streams of gold and silver into the treasury of the church.

Of the earlier part of Mr. Brown's Glasgow ministry, we have received a very interesting account from the Rev. John M'Ewan, of the Free Church, Roseneath, who was at that time a member of the congregation.

‘What struck me about Dr. Brown, when he entered

on his Glasgow ministry, was the earnest manner in which he discharged his duties both in and out of the pulpit. Like his brother, Dr. Charles Brown, he had a remarkable gift of prayer. His soul was aflame with holy fervour while leading the devotions of the sanctuary: this threw a marked solemnity over the congregation, and made us feel that we were personally dealing with God, and pleading as men in earnest for spiritual blessings. There was no sameness in his prayers, but great variety, both of thought and expression.

‘He accompanied the reading of the Word with extempore explanations, and his extensive knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages came prominently forward on those occasions, and enabled him to open up certain passages with a clearness and fulness that removed many a difficulty from our minds, and rendered the Bible to us a precious emporium of divine truth.

‘As for his preaching, it was founded on Christian doctrine, and was both sound and evangelical. Here he was at his best, especially during the first few years of his ministry among us. He was not content with laying down the exegesis of his text, but enforced in a powerful manner the truth embodied in it, and pressed it in his own peculiar way on the conscience of his people.

‘His great theme was the cross. From that he never deviated, but kept it in the forefront of all his sermons, and made great use of it in pressing the claims of the Gospel upon us, and in urging us to lay our sins at the foot of the cross, and to leave them there in the exercise of a heaven-born faith.

‘He never shrouded the cross with flowers of rhetoric,

or with the fancies of men who were only half-hearted in their sympathy with it, and in their maintenance of it as the great central doctrine of the Word, but ever kept it before us, shining down on our souls like the sun from an unclouded sky.

‘I believe it was the clear way in which he proclaimed the doctrine of the cross, along with the collateral views encircling it, that made his ministry, under God, such a success. I can speak from personal experience, as well as from personal knowledge, of the effect which his ministrations had on a large number of the congregation, and specially on young men like myself.

‘He led us to think of religion in a way we had not previously done, and constrained us to feel that Christ had claims on our hearts and lives which we had not hitherto considered, and which we could not then either dispute or disown.

‘And when we came to apply for admission to the membership of the church, his dealings with the conscience were those of a man who had more than a common knowledge of the heart and its workings. He was not content with holding a weekly class for about two months preceding the communion, but he invited us to his house individually, and there dealt most lovingly with us, opening up the Christian life in all its fulness, and speaking most tenderly of the love of Christ, and of the privilege of celebrating that love at the table of sacramental communion; and ere we left he commended us to God in prayer, that He would enable us to celebrate with acceptance the dying, redeeming love of Christ.

‘This recalls to my mind the fact that Dr. Brown always arranged that our elder should visit each cate-

chumen; and I well remember that Mr. Robert Munsie (long the publisher of the *Scottish Guardian* newspaper, which then occupied the same position in Glasgow, and held the same Disruption principles as the *Witness* did in Edinburgh), called on me, and spoke most solemnly and suitably on the step I was about to take, asked me some important questions on church doctrine and church life, and then prayed for me most fervently. His dealings with me on that occasion I will never forget, though fifty years have passed away since then.

‘I don’t know any minister who was so highly favoured with elders as was Dr. Brown. They were men of God, men of faith, men of prayer, men remarkably sound in the doctrines of the Word. When I mention old Peter Ewing, John Craig, William and Robert Munsie, brothers beloved, Matthew Witherspoon, Mr., afterwards Sir Michael, Connal, and several others, none of whom now survive, you need not wonder that our beloved pastor was greatly helped and encouraged in the good work of the Lord in which he was engaged. They were seldom absent from the weekly prayer meeting, and always took part in it, offering one or other of the prayers, and even conducted the meeting wholly when our minister had occasion to be absent.

‘He had a peculiar habit of seldom appearing at the church on the Sabbath forenoons until the bell had almost ceased ringing, when he would be seen hurrying to the vestry just in time to put on his gown and bands, and be ushered into the pulpit by “William,” the worthy and much respected beadle.

‘He had a large congregation, who dearly loved him, and highly valued his ministrations. He was a faithful

pastor, visiting his people regularly, and not spending time with them in idle, fruitless conversation, but speaking most kindly to the children, asking them to repeat to him one or two questions in the Shorter Catechism, and warmly urging them to choose the good part that should never be taken from them, well knowing,

“ ‘Twill save a thousand cares
To mind salvation young.”

He then spoke faithfully to our parents, urging them to cultivate personal religion, to observe family worship, “to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” and closing the whole with a fervent prayer that parents and children alike might enjoy the gracious presence of God in their hearts and homes.

‘Altogether Dr. Brown’s ministry, especially up to the time of the publication of his able work on the second Advent of our Lord, was one of great fruitfulness; for there can be no doubt that he was honoured of God in leading a large number of young men and young women to accept Christ as their personal Saviour, in building up and edifying the many advanced and ripe Christians among his flock, in cheering and comforting God’s people amid the trials and sorrows of desert life, and in strengthening the faith and brightening the hopes of dying saints. Most of these have passed away from this earthly scene, and have, ere this, welcomed their spiritual father, the dear old saint of God, on his entrance into heaven, while some who are now ministers of the Gospel, or elders of the church, or Sabbath-school teachers, or members of the church, though not many, are still alive, who have warm recol-

lections of him as their much loved pastor, and have grateful hearts to God that Dr. David Brown laboured for several years in Free St. James's Church, Glasgow, preaching to his flock the glorious Gospel of God's grace, to the glory of God and the good of many souls.'

The *Glasgow Examiner* of March 29, 1848, had a sketch of the Rev. David Brown, one of a series on 'Our Scottish Clergy.' It was lavish in praise of the new church which had recently been erected by the congregation, and which it considered to be a very model. Of the minister, too, it had much good to say. The sermon, from Zech. x. 1, lasted for an hour and five minutes, and the first prayer likewise was somewhat long. 'The earnestness of the preacher lends the chief charm to his preaching. He generally leans over the Bible, and fixing his eye seemingly to some object a little to the right hand side of the church, he manifests great anxiety both in voice and gesture. His style of address partakes largely of the colloquial. The preacher often speaks to his people as if engaged in conversation, in which both parties are deeply interested. Occasionally he uses the direct form of address, and he individualises his audience in order to reach their hearts and consciences more effectually. His voice is particularly effective in expressing the tender and pathetic. He often, however, allows it to fall so as to be inaudible to strangers.'

Many who enjoyed his ministrations used to dwell with marked emphasis on the elevated tone of his prayers. They were always fervent, but sometimes, with uplifted head and pleading voice, he seemed to

be in actual contact with heaven. A member of his flock, then a boy, still surviving, was so struck with this that oftener than once he seemed to see a halo round his head. It was probably one of those cases where, in persons of very sensitive nerve, the imagination overcomes the senses.

The church where Dr. Brown's congregation worshipped, before the erection of their own building, being in the neighbourhood of the barracks where the Ninety-Third Regiment was quartered, a portion of the soldiers used to attend his ministry. Dr. Brown was greatly interested in them, and some of them having attended his communicants' class, were admitted to the church, and were to partake of the Lord's Supper for the first time on the following Sunday. For some reason or another, into which it is needless to inquire, the colonel of the regiment gave orders that on that day they should all attend at the Established Church. Dr. Brown was equally distressed for the disappointment of the young men, and indignant at this tyrannical exercise of authority. He accordingly wrote to the Duke of Wellington as commander-in-chief, complaining of the interference. He received a very civil reply from the Duke (which has unfortunately been lost), expressing strong disapproval of the action of the colonel, and saying that he had expressed his disapproval to him and ordered him to make a public apology before the regiment. The poor colonel was terribly mortified, and, it is said, never got over the affront.

It is needless to recall, what all the world knows, the distinguished services of the Ninety-Third Regiment

shortly after, both in the Crimea, and in India at the time of the Mutiny. In Mr. Forbes Mitchell's *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*, many thrilling stories are told of 'the regiment that saved the saviour of India,'—alluding to its service in the capture of Lucknow, where Havelock and Outram with their troops, after fighting their way to the Residency, were themselves imprisoned till liberated by Sir Colin Campbell, afterwards colonel of the Ninety-Third. The Ninety-Third, besides doing wonders of valour against the mutineers, showed themselves able to overcome what a Royal Duke once called 'the only enemy that the British soldier has to fear,' when the mutineers on one occasion, in order to entrap them, thirsty and weary as they were, placed rum casks in their line of march, with the ends knocked out, expecting that the British would break their ranks and fly to the rum, and intending to fall on them in the confusion and smash them. 'But the Ninety-Third marched right on past the barrels; and the supernumerary rank soon upset the casks, leaving the contents to soak into the dry ground.'

It would appear that the reproach of being Free Churchmen still clung to some men of the regiment. Whether 'Willie MacBean,' originally an Inverness-shire ploughman, afterwards a major-general, and at one time in command of the regiment, was one of Dr. Brown's young men, we are not certain; but the army did not contain a braver or more efficient soldier, and the Victoria Cross was never more worthily bestowed. Of his future history Mr. Forbes Mitchell relates: 'He was kept seven years lance-corporal, partly because promotion went slow in the Ninety-Third; but several

were promoted over him, because, at the time of the Disruption of the Church of Scotland, MacBean joined the Free Kirk party. This fact may appear strange to military readers of the present day, with our short service and territorial regiments; but in the times of which I am writing, as I have before mentioned, the Ninety-Third was constituted as much after the arrangements of a Highland parish as those of a regiment in the army, and, to use the words of the Colonel who commanded, "MacBean was passed over *four* promotions, because he was a — Free Kirker."

In the year 1852 the Senatus of the College of New Jersey, better known as Princeton College, unanimously conferred on Mr. Brown the degree of D.D. The national universities of Scotland at that time, under the influence of an unworthy dislike of the Free Church, abstained from conferring honorary degrees even on its most eminent ministers, although soon after they adopted a more liberal policy. But a degree from Princeton was counted equal to any degree from Scotland, although it was not always understood at home that the degree came not from the Theological Seminary of Princeton, with which the name of Dr. Charles Hodge was so honourably associated, but from the College which in former years had had Jonathan Edwards and Dr. Witherspoon as Presidents, and in the future was to be presided over by Dr. James M'Cosh.

Dr. Brown's ministry in Glasgow lasted fourteen years, and terminated on his election to a professor's chair in Aberdeen in 1857.

CHAPTER VI

EARLIER WRITINGS

It was during his Glasgow ministry that Mr. Brown came out as an author. Two important works came from his pen: his book on the *Second Advent*, and his *Commentary on the Gospels*.

From a very early period he had been specially attracted to exegetical study, and found in it an occupation alike interesting, dignified, and edifying. Of all the exegetical writers who exercised an influence on him, the chief was John Albert Bengel, one of the greatest critical scholars of Germany in the eighteenth century, and author, among other works, of the *Gnomon of the New Testament*, one of the best commentaries that have ever been written. What he most valued in Bengel was the remarkable combination of accurate and thorough scholarship with profound spirituality. In a very able and comprehensive paper on the 'Life and Labours of Bengel,' which he contributed to the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* in March 1853, he draws a careful portrait of the man, and furnishes an exposition of his views and methods, which, if we may use the figure, bore to Mr. Brown's own method the relation of the primary rainbow to the secondary. For Mr. Brown was himself a pupil of the

school of Bengel. The glow of simple but earnest piety which brightened alike the life and the writings of the German divine was very congenial to him; hardly less so the critical acumen which could classify ancient manuscripts of Scripture, and resolve them into families; while in interpretation, his one great object was to discover the natural sense of the passage, discarding traditional interpretations, which, however popular and dear to spiritual hearts, rested on fantastic, and therefore unreliable principles. By this fidelity to the true principles of interpretation, Bengel's own feelings sustained a shock in his earlier years, and he was much concerned to think that this was but an index of the still greater disturbance which his views would raise in the minds of many orthodox and pious countrymen. *They* might easily keep off the painful impression, but *he* could not do so quite so easily.

‘What seemed to *them* plainly incompatible with the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, they just resolved not to believe. But his was not a mind to be thus eased. Facts to him were facts, to whatever conclusions they might tend. Unable, however, to adjust them at that early stage, he carried the matter to his knees—a quarter to which we have heard of few great Biblical scholars resorting for a solution of their difficulties—and there he found relief enough for the present, and encouragement to investigate the whole subject anew as leisure might permit. It was with reference to this and other mental struggles which at that period of his studies he underwent, and which most, if not all, superior and earnest students experience, that he penned the following remark: “the most important of all controversies are those we experience within us, of which there is no end till the

whole mind has undergone a change, and the whole man has struggled into renovation. When this is done, a host of casuistical scruples disappear at once, and we soon get rid of the remainder.”

Bengel and Brown had a like experience in early life, having spent a considerable time in spheres comparatively obscure.

‘ Nearly thirty years of his life were spent in a sphere comparatively humble. But precious was the fruit of his labours in those who received from him their theological training, and caught his genial tone ; most salutary, in the then deliquescent state of Lutheran theology, was that union of accurate learning and Christian simplicity, of spirituality and sobriety, of soundness in the faith, with independent investigation and breadth of study which distinguished both his teaching and his writings ; and while not a few who then attracted a larger measure of public attention, and for a time exercised much more influence, possess now little more than a historical interest, as links in the great chain of events which marked and moulded the times, the critical and expository labours of Bengel are for all time, (we speak not of his prophetic computations) and are at this day as fresh as when they first issued from the Tübingen Press.’

Much though Mr. Brown esteemed Calvin as a commentator, he perhaps valued Bengel more.

‘ The character of the two minds as interpreters presents some very interesting points. The penetration, sagacity, and sound sense which both display, their independence of mind, and fidelity to the *natural* sense of the text, in preference to the most hallowed traditional views of its meaning, and the holy reverence with which both listened to Him that speaketh from heaven—these and such as

these are points of resemblance. But while Calvin almost disdained verbal niceties, as a species of trifling with the Word of God, setting chief store by the scope and spirit of a passage, which he grasped with unrivalled correctness and felicity, Bengel weighed every clause, phrase, and word, to the minutest particle, and never lost a shade or fibre of thought (as Hare expresses it) which prayerful and painstaking study of the entire sacred text could disclose to him. Each of these methods has of course its advantages. In Calvin there is a noble manliness, but at times rather too much generality; in Bengel a singular delicacy of perception, but at times an over-refinement. If in the one you sometimes miss what should have been there, in the other you occasionally find what ought not to have been there. In masculine and reverential expression of great principles of truth and duty revealed in the New Testament, none can come up to Calvin; while the philological accuracy with which Bengel simply *indicates* the sense of the divine text, and the unctuous tenderness and tranquil spirituality with which he moves on, make you feel as if nobody and nothing came in between you and the Holy Ghost, but that you are listening directly to the word from Him, or getting rid, at least, by means of this critic, of obstacles to your doing so. In a word, no minister can properly dispense with either of these illustrious expositors. Both are best, and both should be consulted together.'

These extracts show us both Mr. Brown's own idea of the true method of Scripture exposition and his estimate of the two great expositors, Calvin and Bengel, at whose feet he deemed it a privilege to sit. Of his own expository works we do not attempt any elaborate examination, but merely indicate in a general way their character and drift.

The work entitled, *The Second Advent: will it be Pre-millennial?* was originally in the form of magazine articles, furnished at the request of an editor; these were enlarged into a volume, and in the second edition enlarged still further, because answers were now furnished to some of the criticisms that had appeared, making a substantial book of five hundred pages. The second edition appeared in 1849, and since that time five other editions have been issued.¹ In the United States the book met with a peculiarly gratifying reception, and among American divines the author's name was placed at once in the rank of our most distinguished theologians. The importance of the work was seen from the many answers which it evoked. Referring to these in the introduction to his second edition, the author says:—

‘In addition to a small tract by Mr. Wood (Rev. Walter Wood of Elie), a volume by Mr. Scott, a chapter of the sixth edition of Mr. Bickersteth's *Signs of the Times*, the Duke of Manchester has honoured me with a pretty full reply in a lengthened appendix to his *Finished Mystery*; Mr. Andrew Bonar has published *Redemption Drawing Nigh*, in reply to me; and Mr. Horatius Bonar, besides the reference to my book, though not by name, throughout the greater part of his *Prophetical Landmarks*, has reviewed it in three long articles in the *Presbyterian Review*, and since the cessation of that periodical, has embodied the substance of these articles, with very large additions, in a volume issued a few months since, entitled, *The Coming and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ*, being

¹ The seventh edition was published by T. and T. Clark.

an examination of the work of the Rev. D. Brown on the second coming of the Lord.'

Notwithstanding all these criticisms, the book continued to show ample evidence of public esteem. Nor has it lost its character as a standard treatise. Professor Agar Beet, an expositor of the highest authority, in his work on *The Last Things*, published only a few months ago, has given this remarkable testimony in its favour: 'For more than forty years it has had its place as by far the best book on the subject; and I have pleasure in recommending it as still worthy of careful study. It is a noble example of careful Biblical research.' But the genealogy of the book must be traced a little further back. Mr. Brown had been led to a very careful study of the second Advent by his experiences under Mr. Irving. As we have already seen, he had believed from his student days that the second Advent would be pre-millennial. He had been so far impressed by Mr. Irving's views as to think it possible that in preparation for our Lord's Advent, signs and wonders would be manifested at that very time to arrest the attention of the church and of the world, and prepare them for that decisive event. When he found that the alleged signs and wonders were fallacious, and most certainly not of heavenly origin, he naturally recoiled from Mr. Irving's views on the nearness of the Advent, and separated himself from him. But this only led him to a full and very careful examination of the doctrine of the second Advent as set forth in Scripture, and especially the time when it was to take place. This examination behoved to be conducted on sound principles of Biblical

interpretation, involving a clear distinction between what was figurative or allegorical, and what was literal; and it ought to co-ordinate the whole teaching of Scripture on the last things, leaving no contradiction between one part and another, and requiring no unnatural or even grotesque suppositions to explain apparently conflicting representations.

The result was a very firm belief that the second Advent would not be pre-millennial, but that it would take place at the end of the world, simultaneously with the resurrection of all that were in their graves, and the universal judgment of the quick and the dead, of the righteous and the wicked. Here, and here only, could he find a firm foundation; on this basis, and on this only, could he co-ordinate the whole teaching of Scripture on the last things. The other view, making the second Advent pre-millennial, and spreading the judgment over the whole millennium, though it might stimulate saints, as it had stimulated Edward Irving, into rare intensity of spiritual feeling, and high disregard of all that was carnal, could not exercise over mankind generally that solemn, over-awing influence which comes from the thought of a simultaneous judgment, when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and all, small and great, shall stand together before the great white throne.

Yet Mr. Brown tells us that he would not have written a book in which he must place himself in opposition to many brethren whom he esteemed and loved with all his heart, had he not thought that their view was fitted to do harm. It was because

he saw in it elements which at once fascinate the carnal and attract the spiritual, that he thought it of consequence to sift it. He unquestionably had in his mind the sad wreck of a noble career to which it had led in Irving's case, and the strange jumble of the spiritual and the carnal, the heavenly and the earthly, which the church-body to which he gave rise, or to which at least his name is often given, has come to present. One of his chief motives was to rescue 'THE BLESSED HOPE of the Saviour's appearing from the erroneous and repulsive circumstances with which this doctrine invests it, and which have had the effect of frightening away the church from an expectation which nothing else can compensate the loss of.' Nothing seemed to him so grand or so impressive as the old doctrine, expressed in Christ's words, 'the hour cometh when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation.' Nothing seemed to him to glorify Christ so much as the view, that when He should come again 'to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe,' it should not be to institute a mere millennial dispensation, in which much evil would still be mingled with good, and which would be followed by a terrible revolt, where Jesus himself would have to use the sword against enemies in flesh and blood; but to celebrate the final and complete triumph of light over darkness, and holiness over sin; to set up the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; to realise the glorious announcement, 'Behold, I make all things new.'

The mode of treatment followed in his book seems to have been that which, in his own case, brought him to the conclusions which he maintains and defends. Essentially, it consisted in starting from certain facts which Scripture seems to make very plain, and showing that the pre-millennial theory ran athwart these facts, and led to conclusions that could not be maintained with them. One of these facts, for example, was, that the church or mystical body of Christ, would be complete at His second coming. It is said in Scripture that the order of the resurrection is to be, 'Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.' When Christ should come again He would present the church to Himself, 'a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.' To Dr. Brown it seemed as plain as day that the entire body of the redeemed was denoted in these passages; but according to the pre-millennial view, many are to be added to the church after the second coming. He found his opponents at a great loss to explain the standing of such persons, inasmuch as they did not constitute 'the bride,' who was already complete, and must therefore be relegated to an inferior position. In like manner he took his stand on the simultaneous character of the final judgment. Surely if the parable of the sheep and the goats teaches anything, it is that both classes are to be judged together. But pre-millennialism makes the judgment a process of long duration, extending over the whole millennium, yet leaving it uncertain when the saints of the millennial and post-millennial periods are to be judged, or whether they are to be judged at all. This method

of treatment may not be the *reductio ad absurdum*, but it is the *reductio ad contradictionem*.

Some of his opponents twitted him on his taking this line, and asked why he did not follow another method—the method of examining, first of all, the passages that seemed to teach directly that the Advent would be pre-millennial. To this Dr. Brown replied that he did not feel bound to adopt any other man's order; he preferred his own.

But although he has laid out his subject on his own lines, all must admit that he has treated it most comprehensively, and that there is not an important text nor an important argument but has received from him ample and careful consideration. That the subject is treated in a style of masterly ability must be apparent to every fair reader of his book. There is not a page that does not show both vigour and freshness of treatment. Within the compass of the volume there is a great amount of able and satisfying exegesis. And there is no unwillingness to admit difficulties or to deny to opponents whatever force there may be in their arguments. With reference, for example, to the command to *watch* for the coming of the Lord, and the argument of his opponents that watching is impossible if there is to be a certain interval of a thousand years before He comes, he admits that this argument is plausible, and, at the first glance, apparently decisive. But then, were not the Thessalonians called to watch although they were told that a long process, the development of the man of sin, was to take place before the coming of the Lord? We are surely in as favourable circumstances for watching as they. Moreover, the

watching called for is not an exercise dependent on *time*, but a habit of soul called for by the nature of the fact. Christ's second coming is to give effect to all His principles of rule; on the one hand it is to make it plain that nothing but righteousness brings a blessing, and, on the other hand, it is to complete the felicity of the righteous. It is to overthrow all the maxims by which worldly men have been guided in this world, and to bring all such to confusion and dismay; while it is to show that the righteous are the men whom the King delighteth to honour, and to introduce them to untold honour, prosperity, and blessing. To be watching for this event is, on the one hand, to be watching constantly against all habits and acts that do not agree with its standard, and aiming as constantly at all the graces and modes of living that are agreeable to the mind of Christ; and, on the other hand, it is to be living in expectation of the highest blessedness of which our nature is susceptible; to be looking for the final raising of our bodies, and their assimilation to Christ's glorious body, and for all that glory and happiness which shall accrue when the whole church is gathered together, and Jesus diffuses the lustre of His salvation and the joy of His fellowship on every side. Yes, the second coming of Christ, in the view of Dr. Brown, is indeed 'the blessed hope' of His church, the consummation to which all our wishes and all our prayers should ever be directed, and in reference to which we should now meet the announcement, 'Behold I come quickly,' with the longing, hoping, trusting prayer, 'Even so come, Lord Jesus.'

While the great ability of the book will be acknow-

ledged by all, it must equally be admitted that its spirit is in harmony with its subject—that the author's own heart beats and glows with the ardour and the fervour which befit his theme. Take a sample from his reference to the future of the Jews. The restoration of the Mosaic sacrifices and the temple service, the re-enactment of the Abrahamic covenant, and the elevation of the converted Jews to a place of honour and glory far above other Christians, he wholly repudiates; but the marvellous effects on themselves and on the world when at last they look on Him whom they have pierced, he fully and joyfully owns.

‘When they see that blood, which, as a nation, they murderously shed, turned as a fountain open to themselves for sin and uncleanness; when they find their robes washed and made white in that very blood of the Lamb—how will they water a free pardon with their tears, how generously will they detest forgiven sin (to use Dr. Owen's words), how will they be disposed to exclaim to their Gentile brethren everywhere, “Come, hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul”? O for the Apostle's spirit of great sorrow and continual heaviness of heart for them of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, and for his glowing expectations of the benefit which we ourselves, as Gentiles, would derive from their conversion! And the drops of that spirit are certainly falling upon the churches. But showers are needed. “Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars,—until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high.” But “I the Lord will hasten it in his time.”’

If it be said, as doubtless it will be by some, that Dr. Brown's language to his opponents, when he has driven them into a corner, is sometimes sharp beyond what

becomes the debates of Christians, it is to be observed that any such keenness is due to the intensity of his own convictions; he is disposed sometimes to think so himself, and then he expresses himself apologetically. But, as a whole, his book fully and explicitly recognises the great worth of his opponents, and is written in the spirit of one to whom it will be a delightful experience in a better world to see eye to eye with brethren from whom he has been compelled to differ in this.

Of Dr. Brown's *Commentary on the Gospels*, a very few words will suffice. It was suggested, we believe, by Mr. Morrison, of Messrs. Collins and Sons of Glasgow, on the ground that it was very desirable to bring out a succinct commentary on the whole Bible, adapted to modern times. That firm had already issued a commentary founded on Scott and Henry, edited by the Rev. Dr. Macfarlane, of Erskine Church, Glasgow, which had a wonderful success. For the new commentary, more up to date, which was now needed, Dr. Brown's name was suggested by Mr. Morrison, and readily accepted by the firm. Dr. Brown had for coadjutors the Rev. A. R. Fausset, of St. Cuthbert's, York, who did the poetical and prophetic books of the Old Testament, and Dr. Jamieson, of St. Paul's, Glasgow, who undertook the historical books. At first Dr. Brown undertook the whole of the New Testament, but he was obliged on his removal to Aberdeen to give up the latter part of it after having overtaken the Gospels, Acts, and Romans. Mr. Morrison informs the present writer that he had many consultations with

Mr. Collins on the proposed commentary, and that he suggested Dr. Brown as one of the best, if not the very best, scholar of his church in Glasgow. The book, which was finally published in six large octavo volumes, met with great success both in this country and the United States. To one publishing house in Philadelphia a thousand copies were shipped.

Of a book which has had so great a circulation and is so well known, all we need to say is that it combines brevity, accurate scholarship, felicitous expression, and spiritual feeling in a degree that has not been equalled in any other English commentary. Many is the student of Scripture who has found it throw new light on passages that may have puzzled him before, and who has had his best feelings vividly excited by the atmosphere of fervent emotion which encompasses the exposition. And many is the preacher who has found himself better able to instruct his congregation from the brief but suggestive notes of Dr. Brown. Instead of quoting from the journals of the time, the writer may be allowed to name two distinguished men, of somewhat different schools, who have quite recently expressed to him their appreciation of Dr. Brown's *Commentary*, the one in conversation, the other in writing. Principal Moule, of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, has told him of the great benefit he had derived from it, because it seemed in few words to give the very essence and spirit of the sacred text. Dr. Marcus Dods gave him his opinion of the Commentaries on the Gospels, Romans, and Corinthians in the following words: 'His Commentary on the Romans contributed to the *Bible-Class Handbooks* I consider one of the very best aids to the study of the

epistle—perhaps a clearer presentation of the doctrine of the epistle than any other exposition. He also contributed to Schaff's *Commentary* an exposition of both Epistles to the Corinthians, which I do not know so well, but which Dr. Schaff spoke highly of. The immense circulation attained by his Gospels is proof not only of the publishers' enterprise, but of the intrinsic worth of the book.' In point of fact, Dr. Brown, besides writing commentaries on the Gospels, Acts, and Romans for Collins, and on the Corinthians for Dr. Schaff, issued a new commentary on the Romans many years after, for Clark's *Handbooks for Bible-Classes*. Professor Salmond, in one of his obituary notices of Dr. Brown, speaks of these commentaries in the highest terms, those in Collins's series being 'undoubtedly the best portion of the series to which they belong.' But we shall have occasion to notice his later writings further on.

CHAPTER VII

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. WILLIAM DYCE, R.A.

WE have referred to Dr. Brown's early intimacy with his cousin and brother-in-law, William Dyce. Both young men had much in common, though the Dyces had been Episcopalians from time immemorial, and indeed the two were so much together as to be spoken of as the Siamese twins. Mr. Dyce was at first prevented by his father from following the profession of artist, and had indeed studied to some extent both theology and medicine. But the artist was too strong in him to be repressed. At the age of three, he had shown that he could draw; at seventeen, a painting of his, 'The infant Hercules strangling the Serpent,' won the applause of Sir Thomas Lawrence, President of the Royal Academy; he was accordingly sent to Rome and other great schools of art, and the world knows what a master he became, especially in religious painting.

In 1838, two years after his cousin David had been settled at the Ord, Mr. Dyce was appointed to an office in the newly formed School of Design, which led to his removal from Aberdeen to London, and changed the form of intercourse between the two friends from conversation to correspondence. In connection with the Royal Commission for the Fine Arts, of which the

Prince Consort was President, Mr. Dyce rendered great service, and was on terms of intimate and confidential intercourse with His Royal Highness. A few of David Brown's letters to William Dyce have been preserved, but unfortunately none on the other side. In these letters there is much that is interesting in itself, and much likewise that throws light on Dr. Brown's character and views.

Mr. Dyce was at once an artist and a theologian. It may be said of him that while the theologian influenced the artist, the artist influenced the theologian. His devout spirit led him to view art as the handmaid of religion, and under this conviction his own energies were mainly consecrated to sacred subjects. But the artist spirit reacted also on the theologian. For the artist could hardly fail to be drawn toward the churches to which art had been wedded, and by which it had been most appreciated and encouraged. The Presbyterian Church was not one of these, and it was not much wonder that Mr. Dyce, a hereditary Episcopalian, should have been drawn strongly in the opposite direction.

Mr. Dyce regarded the Church of England as a happy medium betwixt Romanism on the one hand, and Presbyterianism on the other. And his sympathies lay strongly in the High Church direction. We have a glimpse of his ecclesiastical views in a pamphlet which he published in 1851, entitled *Notes on Shepherds and Sheep: a Letter to John Ruskin, Esq., M.A.* The letter was in reply to a pamphlet of Mr. Ruskin's, *Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds*. A more mysterious title has seldom been devised, and Mr. Dyce,

before reading the booklet itself, had fancied that Mr. Ruskin had set himself to enlighten the world on the architecture of churches. In reality it bore on the old question, What is the Christian Church? what is its authority? and the authority of its clergy? Mr. Dyce's pamphlet is in many ways very clever, but it is one of those productions which promise much but accomplish little. It lays down with wonderful lucidity the points that have to be settled in order to answer the questions propounded. It handles them in a brave literary style, for, like Ruskin himself, Dyce could wield the pen hardly less efficiently than the brush. But when you come to the conclusion, the matter is far from clear to you. All that we need say is, that whereas Mr. Ruskin distinguishes widely between the church visible and the church invisible, Mr. Dyce brings them closer to each other, and ascribes to the church visible more of the dignity, worth, and authority of the church invisible than Mr. Ruskin had done, or than his brother-in-law or Protestants generally would be willing to allow.

As an artist, Mr. Dyce occupied very high ground. Far from being satisfied to produce works of a high class, bringing him fame and corresponding remuneration, he endeavoured as a philosopher to elucidate and exemplify the principles on which art is founded, and then to indicate the true application of art, in connection with the more ordinary avocations of human life. He went back to the sources, and he looked forward to the results. His idea of the true application of art is indicated in a pamphlet of which he was nominally joint author, but really much more, entitled, '*Letter to Lord Meadowbank, and the Committee of the Honourable*

Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, on the Best Means of Ameliorating the Arts and Manufactures of Scotland in point of Taste. By William Dyce, M.A., A.R.A., and Charles H. Wilson, A.S.A., R.I.A., 1837.' He dwells on the great want of schools of art in Great Britain as compared with Continental countries, and strongly urges that far more pains should be taken to instruct in the true principles of taste all who have to do with the business of designing, in whatsoever form, or in whatsoever material. He admits that much progress had been made in the production of tasteful designs since the beginning of the century. And with excellent judgment and foresight he urges the employment of those very means which, during the latter half of it, have so remarkably improved designs in our manufactures, and in all other works where taste is called for. Who that has studied the art-productions of the end of last century and the beginning of this has not been struck with their miserable inferiority? What miserable paper and printing and illustrations in the books of the period! What barn-like churches, and clumsy, pretentious, hideous gentlemen's mansions! What bare and featureless domestic furniture! Mr. Dyce deserves warm acknowledgment for the impulse he gave to a purer taste. His object was to bring back in some degree the old *régime*, where, in architecture especially, the workman was in some degree an artist and the artist a workman. In a word, he helped to make the objects that continually occur in our houses, in our public buildings, and in our streets more pleasing to the eye and more soothing in their influence on our

feelings ; to surround us with creations that continually prove to us that

‘ A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.’

In the absence of letters of his own, these explanations are needed to show what manner of man it was with whom Mr. Brown corresponded. The letter which follows, written from the Ord, congratulating him on his appointment in connection with the School of Design, shows that though Mr. Brown was immersed in the active duties of his charge, and though the declaration of war with the civil courts which the General Assembly had issued a few weeks before was ringing in his ears, he was well able to appreciate the very different line of work to which his friend had devoted himself, and could expect good fruits from his prosecution of it. There is no sign of anything but what is frank and ingenuous in Mr. Brown’s letter ; but it exemplifies an excellent rule of policy which ministers of the Gospel are apt to overlook. When Dr. Chalmers sat down beside the scoffing cobbler, and set himself assiduously to understand how he did his work, he exemplified the principle that if we would get men to be interested in our avocations it is very useful to show an interest in theirs. Mr. Brown shows a lively interest in the profession of his friend, and a lively appreciation of the principles on which it rested and the ends to which it was directed.

‘ ORD MANSE, *July 27, 1838.*

‘ MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I offer you my very sincere congratulations on your recent appointment, so honourable to yourself, and so likely to advance your professional prospects, unless indeed you follow Dr. Johnson’s example, who

never wrote a book after he was *pensioned*. I read your printed letter with the highest interest, and enjoyed it much, not merely from its opening up important views bearing on the prosperity of our arts and manufactures, but especially from the combination of poetry and philosophy which it displayed, I mean the poetic and philosophical views of Art, which it showed you took. It is this which such a stranger to the principles and practice of Art as I am can nevertheless appreciate and feast upon; and it pleased me to find what facility you have in giving expression by the pen as well as by the pencil and the brush to your ideas and feelings. This is a power which few, I presume, even of those who excel in Art can lay claim to. I do not say this to puff you up, but, if you will allow me to say it, to stimulate you to exercise yourself in both kinds, confident as I am that nothing but an inexcusable indolence can prevent you from rising to eminence as a writer on the philosophy of the arts in connection with their practice.

‘Your old studies, in which you were perpetually engaged in seeking to discover the connections that subsisted amongst the arts and sciences, according to the ancients, and the principles, if any there were, common to all of them, have, under the direction of a mind naturally fine and well exercised, supplied you with a store of ideas which you can now give forth matured, expanded, and divested of those crudities and crotchets incident to beginning to think, and groping after original and independent views. Let me then use the freedom of advising you not to slacken your exertions in those departments in which your new office does not require anything from you, but whether you choose to cultivate portrait painting or not, as to which I presume not to say a word, that you will continue *the practice of the art*, and throw all your enthusiasm into it, employing your spare time in litera-

ture in general, or more particularly in the literature of your profession, which, however, I need not say, cannot be cultivated in a liberal and catholic sense without your giving yourself as ample scope as possible in the enlargement of your general knowledge.

‘All this, I daresay you will think, might come as well from others, but our old intimacy, which I hope you have not forgotten, gives me some liberty. There are other things on which I could enlarge, but I neither like to write, nor do you care to read, long letters. Could your pocket afford the expense of a visit to us, though but for a few days (as short indeed as you like, so it be at all), I could enjoy some conversation with you exceedingly, and should your arrangements not admit of it, I shall certainly regret it, as we are not now likely to meet very often. Do come—I need not say that this desire is as strong on Catharine’s part as mine. You have never seen our chicks yet, and our hill-top would not, I daresay, disagree with your health, before going to be enveloped in the smoke and din of the great city. . . .

‘Trusting, my dear William, that though we are now to live further apart than before, you will never allow yourself to forget, or cast away those sacred principles which can alone bind us truly together here, and bring us together in peace hereafter, and that you may experience the practical and delightful efficacy of those principles in the moulding of the character and refining of the feelings, and imparting a satisfaction which the world knoweth nothing of,

‘I remain, with sincere affection and best wishes, your
brother-in-law,
DAVID BROWN.’

‘Catharine, who is quite well, sends her love, and unites in pressing you to give us the treat of a short visit. The children are well also.’

In a letter, dated February 8, 1850, Mr. Brown informs his friend that the subject of 'sacramental grace' had been much in his thoughts, in connection with the Anglican controversy, and that he had more than half resolved to write a book on it, were it not for the impossibility of finding leisure. He confessed that he liked the expression 'sacramental grace,' though he was utterly opposed to the *opus operatum* theory; but *ultras* on both sides were ready to charge him with leaning to it. In December of the same year he tells that he had been importuned to write a book on the 'History of Prophetic Interpretation, especially as regards the Pre-millennial Theory.' 'This I have resolutely resisted, although I have pretty full notes of my Patristic reading, for I take nothing at second hand. The subject is large, the questions involve nice and delicate points on which I dislike dogmatism, and my standard is higher than I expect to reach; and then, I don't see any pressing call at present. Nevertheless, I may do something sometime.' In the same letter he controverts keenly some positions which Mr. Dyce had assumed as to Protestantism and the Church of England.

'You represent Protestantism and Popery as the two extremes between which the Church of England stands. This is contrary to fact, unless you identify the Church of England with a party in it, which, with many varying shades, finds its proper type and Pontifex Maximus in *Laud*. If you try the Church of England by its founders and its articles, which are its professed Confession of Faith, your representation of it is totally at variance with fact, as I read history. . . . When you say your view of

the English Church is that of Cranmer, Jewel, Andrewes, Montague, Hooker, and every writer of any note in the English Church who has written against Popery and Puritanism, you play up several freaks, of which I notice but two. (1) You class together men who had scarcely one thing in common. It is as if I should say the Bishop of Exeter and his dear brother the Bishop of Calcutta, Mr. Bennett and his friend the Vicar of Islington, Dodsworth and Mr. Goode, the Rector of All Hallows. As for Montague, I make you a present of him. But to quote Cranmer and Jewel in support of *your* church principles—*proh Pudor!* Who that has read Jewel's *Apologia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, and his defence of the *Apology*, and who that has read the *Zurich Letters*, in which the precious Fathers of the Protestant Church of England unbosom themselves to the Reformers of Switzerland in whose hospitable cantons they lived during the Marian persecution, consulting them for years and years upon all ecclesiastical questions and emergencies, as men with whom they were one; and not them only, but all the worthies of Continental Protestantism, Calvinistic in doctrine and Presbyterian in platform as they were—who, I say, that reads such works as these can venture to affirm that *they* were not thorough Protestants, but some nondescript medium between Protestantism and Popery, and men that sought to build up some attenuated thing called *the Church*? . . . Excuse this very good-humoured lecture.'

'Oct. 30, 1850. . . . Your view of Dr. Pusey is interesting and well put. It possibly is correct, yet I cannot bring myself to believe that with his views of the church and of doctrine, he would *leave* the Church of Rome, if in it, which, however, he may think a different thing from going into it when out. *Schism* must be a word, and schismatic a name which, if he were the man you describe him, must haunt him "oft in the stilly night."

In his letters Mr. Dyce had shown a strong leaning, at the least, to the opinion that Episcopal government was an essential feature of the Christian Church. Dr. Brown, in reply, abstained from giving his own views, but sent him two extracts, one from a sermon of Canon Benson's ('he is one of the ablest men in the church as a preacher, and was lately Master of the Temple'), the other from an Episcopalian dignitary whom he does not name, but emphatically characterises as not of the Low Church party. The quotation from the latter is as follows [the words within brackets being Dr. Brown's]:

'The proposition that our Episcopal form of government is one of the essential conditions of Christ's church, on the strength of which it has been further maintained that wherever this form of government does not exist, the church of Christ does not exist,—I cannot engage here in an argument to show how utterly baseless this argument is, how it is not only unscriptural, but altogether anti-scriptural, directly repugnant to the whole spirit of the New Testament. Moreover, it is not only unsupported by the reformers of our church, but in plain opposition to their principles, manifested by their actions no less than by their words; as it is also to the principles laid down with irresistible cogency by your greatest authority on questions of ecclesiastical polity. [Hooker, of course.] Nay, even among our divines of the seventeenth century, when the spiritual life which had animated the European mind during the sixteenth was much enfeebled, and when, amid the struggles of parties for the preservation or overthrow of the existing order of things, each party, according to the usual course of human nature, indulged in unmeasured exaggeration of the objects it was contending for,—very few of any note presumed to assert that Episcopacy is indispensable to the being of a church. . . . But I cannot

let slip the present occasion of lifting up my voice to protest against this odious and pernicious corruption of the truth. . . . Indeed, so totally at variance is Hooker's view of Episcopacy with that entertained by our modern Episcopalers, that the learned editor of his works [Keble, I presume] has thought it requisite to frame a theory in order to account for Hooker's aberrations with regard to this prime point of Christian truth; and he apologises for Hooker's error on the ground that he was not acquainted with the Letters of Ignatius under that form in which they appeared in the following century. . . . Still, notwithstanding all the light that flowed in from this new posthumous volume, and notwithstanding the inevitable exaggerations occasioned by the contest with the Puritans, the better part of our divines in the seventeenth century did not account Episcopacy essential to the being of a church; though according to a distinction laid down by Bramhall, many of them deemed it essential to the perfection of a church. Hence they were accustomed to regard the Reformed Churches on the Continent less perfectly constituted than our own, but still as sister churches united to our own by having the same '*One Lord,*' the same '*One Faith,*' the same '*One Baptism*' by the free preaching of God's Word, and the rightful administration of the Sacraments, and moreover by being joined with us in a common protest against the usurpation of Rome. [He quotes from Sancroft and several others whom *a priori* some would take for granted would view things otherwise.] . . . They [our Episcopalers] will indeed refer to some half-a-dozen verses of Scripture, which they have picked up in some blundering manual of ecclesiastical history; but not one of these when rightly interpreted will be found to bear out their proposition; and the chief part will probably attest little else than the ignorance of those who cite them for such a purpose. To those misguided tests of Scripture

add a dozen exaggerated sayings culled out without any critical discernment from this Father and from that, and you have the whole ragged, crippled troop, which our Episcopolaters are wont to muster for maintaining their position that Episcopacy is essential to the church, and for repelling every one who presumes to approach without having the Episcopal flag. This monstrous error, however, which would restrict the power of Christ's mediatorial sacrifice and the efficacy of His sacraments within the limits of Episcopal Churches, is still confined, I trust, in the main, to some of our weaker brethren, who, in the want of logical and plastic power stake themselves up with positive, peremptory assertions. But a modification of the same error is not uncommon even among the better writers of our day, who have lately become squeamish in the application of the term *church* to any branch of the church except such as are subject to an Episcopal government, who call the Lutheran Church, for example, the *Lutheran Body*, or the *Lutheran Communion*; and who think to evade recognising the Scotch Church, by terming it *the Kirk*. Such silliness might make one laugh, unless the miserable evils which absurdities of this kind produce turned one's laugh into a groan.'

After giving this very emphatic extract, Dr. Brown adds an apologetic note, and expresses the hope that the Protestant spirit of the Church of England would prevail.

'Pray do not think that the insertion of the last sentence but one was made with any intention of self-defence or vindication of the church-standing of my own 'Communion,' or, indeed, with any intention at all but to finish my extract, which I did not observe to contain any personal allusion till I was at that sentence, and I would have needed to mutilate it in order to exclude that passage. On this personal view of the matter, I am reminded of an

anecdote I heard the other day of Henry Wilberforce (the recent pervert). He was travelling some years ago in the Highlands, and there he met a company of several ministers of the Church of Scotland (before the Disruption). On shaking hands with them as he was introduced to them one by one, he thought it necessary to explain that he was not by this shake giving them the right hand of fellowship, and begged to say that he could not recognise them as ministers, on which one of them immediately replied in his dry, caustic, but telling manner: "It's of no consequence, sir, whether you do or not." That is just my feeling on the above passage. But I take a deep interest in the English Church, though a Scotch minister, and never so much as now, when the swelling tide of her Protestantism gives hope of a return to the "kindness of her youth and the love of her espousals," when the Romanistic elements, which people are beginning at last to discover and abhor, will receive the check which the Erastian constitution of her framework will probably prevent her casting wholly out.

D. B.'

One other extract we give from Dr. Brown's letters. Mr. Dyce seems to have thought that the liberty allowed to Protestants to examine Scripture for themselves was excessive, and ought to be qualified by some regard to the authority of the church. As he had referred to the passage, Habakkuk ii. 2, Dr. Brown gives an interesting exegesis of that oft misquoted verse, and throws important light on the question, How far are the Scriptures clear enough for plain people, and how far are they not?

'When people *invert* the text you refer to (Hab. ii. 2) 'that he who runs may read,' it is to make it convey as they suppose more clearly its obvious sense. Perhaps few

now indeed know that they *do* invert it. They understand by "running," I suppose, every man who treads his mother earth (or the most ignorant, unlettered man), and that such a man will comprehend (or be able to read) what is written, which beyond doubt is the general meaning. But in order to make that out of their own inverted reading of the text, they certainly pervert the sense of the words. "That he may run who reads" (which is the passage as it stands in the Prophet's text and in our version) means "that whoever reads what is written may be able with ease and alacrity to pursue the path of duty." Grotius's note is this: "That he may at once comprehend (or attain to the sense) who reads it: hence, as the Latins express it, may be able to read *de plano*,"—as on a level surface; by which he means that a metaphor of the Latins involved in the phrase, "*de plano*," meaning "without difficulty," is nearly the same as that here of a "running." My idea rather is that just as the Psalmist promises to "*run* the way of God's commandments when He shall enlarge his heart" (Ps. cxix. 32), so here the prophet gets the injunction, "Write the vision and make it PLAIN upon tables, that he (every one) who readeth it may run" (with ease and alacrity in the way of duty). Of course you will see that the sense thus conveyed *comes out* the same as the popular understanding of it; and no doubt the apparent obscurity of the language in the text and the ease with which, to an English ear, it might be made to express the manifest sense by changing the form of the statement, have occasioned this unjustifiable change. It is a curious example of such *hashing* of a passage, while it makes the words *say* what they don't, landing us in the end in any but the true scope of it.

'With the *inferences* on your part and your "lady friends," I have nothing to do. No doubt the reference is to calamities coming on the nation at the hand of the Chal-

deans for their iniquity, and the design was to give them *such warning* as when *read* would render those *inexcusable* who persevered in their God-provoking courses. But it will be hard to avoid the legitimate *inference* from this as to Scripture generally. When our Lord said, John v. 39, 40, "Search (or 'ye search'—I prefer the former there, but the *approbation* of such a course is the same in both cases) the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have (regard yourselves as having) eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me; and [yet] ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life,"—He (1) gives His great sanction to not only the *reading*, but the *searching* of Scripture by *all*, for He was speaking to a multitude indiscriminately; (2) holds forth Scripture as being rightly regarded by the Jews as the proper authoritative revelation of "eternal life"; (3) represents it as testifying of Him with *sufficient plainness* to render inexcusable any one who possessed without searching it, or searched without finding Christ in it. And however much *we Christians* may suppose Christ to be revealed *clearly* in the Old Testament, I will make bold to maintain that the discovering of Christ as the great theme of the Old Testament was at least as difficult as many things which in Scripture are held by some too obscure or doubtful for any but the learned, and even these only, under *church authority*, to see their way through. In a word, we are far too polemical in such matters. The Scripture is like Him whose word it is, and like all His works in creation and human affairs—full of such things as on this side of time will never be unravelled, nor am I ashamed to confess that there is much that I can't and don't expect fully to understand. In that respect Scripture may be said *not* to be a plain book. But Scripture is so *very plain* upon all that is most fundamental and vital that the whole Jewish and Christian world walks in a blaze of light as to all these things. The

first chapter of Genesis is at this hour the battlefield of geology—is it consistent with the *facts* of geology, and in what sense is it so? Yet that chapter has introduced the idea (never so much as dreamt of by the most profound thinkers outside the pale of revelation) of CREATION. The Gospels are no less the field of intense controversy as to (1) their *Inspiration*, (2) *Harmony*, etc., and yet they are the SUN in the firmament of Scripture. But enough—Ever affectionately yours,
D. BROWN.'

Besides having a great regard for his brother-in-law, Mr. Dyce had a special affection for his sister Catharine, Dr. Brown's wife. He loved herself and esteemed her character and gifts; and, high churchman though he was, he sent specially and expressly for her on his deathbed; she was with him during his last illness, ministering to him affectionately and faithfully; and she remained with his widow for a time to cheer her in her bereavement.

In the Report of the Royal Scottish Academy for 1864, we find a most eulogistic notice of Mr. Dyce. He is described as one of the most remarkable men connected with the Art of the present century; his works are distinguished by rare mastery, alike in conception and execution, whether in portraiture, *genre*, historical or sacred subjects, and whether executed in charcoal or crayon, water colour, tempera, or oil painting, his contributions to Art literature have had no small influence on the progress of the national Art; but most particularly he excelled in the art of mural decoration, mention being especially made of his 'Baptism of Ethelbert' in the House of Lords; the 'Virtues of Chivalry' in the Queen's Robing Room, and the frescoes in the church of All Saints.

CHAPTER VIII

ABERDEEN PROFESSORSHIP

THE College Controversy, which at one time distracted the Free Church in a very painful manner, is now happily all but forgotten; but in the fifties, it was a very serious trouble. To many it seemed that one college, fully equipped, would suffice for the wants of the church, and would prove the most efficient organ for training students; while others maintained that Glasgow and Aberdeen likewise should each have a theological institution. The church decided for the three; but it was felt that something ought to be done to meet the views of those who desired the Edinburgh college to be more fully equipped; and it was accordingly resolved to institute a chair of Exegetical Theology of the New Testament on a permanent basis, and to appoint a professor for it.

Dr. Brown, whose recent writings had drawn him more than ever to exegetical studies, was exceedingly desirous to get this chair. It need create no surprise that since he took to the writing of books, his pulpit and pastoral work was not done with the same whole-hearted devotion as in the earlier years of his ministry, and that he was eager for a change of sphere. All accounts bear that the early years of his Glasgow

ministry were the most fruitful and prosperous, and that while the church at large gained by his books, the congregation of St. James's suffered somewhat. It need not be said that he continued assiduously to discharge his pulpit and pastoral duties, while his habit of early rising and diligent improvement of his time enabled him to accomplish much literary work besides. But no man can overcome impossibilities, and he felt strongly that he could not continue to combine both functions, and that if he was to do permanent service in the one, he must be released from the other.

The Free Church, as we have said, was rent by the College Controversy, and Dr. Brown had sided with 'Her Majesty's Opposition' against Dr. Candlish, Dr. Buchanan, and other 'leaders.' The election of a Professor at Edinburgh took place in 1857 by the vote of the General Assembly. In opposition to him, besides others, Mr. Smeaton, a Professor in the Aberdeen College, was proposed for the chair—an able scholar and most devout man, but one who had none of Dr. Brown's brightness and freshness as an expositor, and had not shown his ability through the press. Dr. Brown was proposed by the Rev. Dr. Beith of Stirling, a minister of high reputation and character, and seconded by Mr. James Cunningham, W.S., a very estimable Edinburgh elder. Dr. Beith referred to the admirable skill he had shown in the pulpit as an expounder of the Word of God, his knowledge of languages, his power of discrimination, his long experience and eminent piety, and particularly to the signal proof of his exegetical ability he had given in the second edition of his work on the second Advent. That work he regarded as a

settlement of the whole question. He referred also to his *Review* articles, which seemed to him to dispose finally of every subject he discussed, and particularly to a recent reply to Professor Sir William Hamilton's disparaging remarks on the Apocalypse—a reply that seemed as conclusive as it was learned and calm. Some one had said he was too old. Dr. Beith remarked that some men at fifty were younger than others at thirty, and that you had only to look at the elastic frame of their friend, his bright eye and readiness of sight and hearing, to see that he was still a young man, whatever number of years might have rolled over his head.

Dr. Candlish, while supporting another candidate, expressed his entire concurrence in every word that had fallen from Dr. Beith in commendation of Dr. Brown. When the vote was taken between Dr. Brown and Mr. Smeaton, Dr. Brown was found to have 163 votes and Mr. Smeaton 181. Dr. Hanna expressed his earnest hope that Dr. Candlish and his friends would support him for the now vacant chair at Aberdeen. To this chair he was soon after appointed without opposition.

The loss of the Edinburgh chair, which was really due to party complications, was felt most deeply by Dr. Brown. The Assembly, however, appointed him to the vacant chair at Aberdeen. But instead of having the Exegetics of the New Testament as his only subject, owing to the smallness of the Aberdeen staff three branches of study were committed to him, namely, Apologetics, Church History, and Exegetics of the Gospels. His election to the Aberdeen chair was due

solely to the proof he had given of his scholarship and ability as a theologian, joined to his eminently pious character. In after years he came to see that this arrangement had been carried out under God's guiding hand, and to rejoice in the manifold sphere of usefulness which he had in Aberdeen.

After an absence of twenty-two years, or, dating from his engagement to Mr. Irving, of twenty-seven, Dr. Brown returned to his native city, being now in his fifty-fifth year, to enter on the duties of his professorship. His father had died some years before; his mother likewise had passed away; but his brother William was still there in all the glow of his enthusiasm, and also his lively, earnest, and warm-hearted brother-in-law, the Rev. John Murray, one of the most respected ministers of the town. At first he was received rather coldly by some, for he had not been among those who were in favour of a college at Aberdeen; but his inaugural lecture served, even in the judgment of opponents, to vindicate his appointment, and to show his fitness for the office.

Its subject was, 'Christ the ultimate Refuge for the Doubter,' founded on the words of Peter, in answer to our Lord's question, 'Will ye also go away?' 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' Reading between the lines, we can see that it was a reflection of his own experience when he was a student of divinity, fascinated for a time by the spell of John Duncan, and drawn towards unbelief. He does not openly allude to this in the lecture, although in after years he had no hesitation in speaking of it to his students and friends.

The idea of the lecture, less familiar forty years ago than it is now, is, that by a process of exhaustion, those who have known Christ, but have become perplexed and almost distracted by difficulties, when once they are confronted by the question, where are they to go if they give Him up, are so staggered by the blank and hopeless prospect that meets them wherever they turn, that they cannot but fall back on Him. The abyss of nothingness is so frightful that they are more drawn to Christ than ever. Where else can they find anything to appease their troubled consciences, to purify their polluted hearts, to bring them to their Father, happy in His favour, and rejoicing in His fellowship? 'Back to Christ' is a cry with which we have been made familiar in these recent years, but all that makes that cry sacred and blessed was well appreciated by Dr. Brown forty years ago. We have been learning of late years to let scientists understand that whatever may be the evidence for the facts and conclusions of science, it cannot overturn, as they allege, the doctrines of the faith, inasmuch as these rest on an independent basis of their own, and are as valid in the realm of faith as any material causes can be in the realm of nature. In short, whatever may be the objections and difficulties around us, we find in CHRIST a light that scatters the darkness, and a guide that leads us, satisfied and happy, towards the goal.

Dr. Brown proceeded to show how the question of Jesus and the answer of Peter bore on the whole circle of theology—apologetics, exegetics, church history, and dogmatics. With an eye to the principles hostile to the faith that were then in full play—transcendental

philosophy, rationalistic criticism, and materialistic science—he foresaw the continuance of those great conflicts in which we have been engaged during these forty years, and which are not yet at an end. Indeed, there never will be an end of conflicts of some kind, so long as the dislike of man continues to the ways and Word of God. In preparing for such conflicts he very earnestly pressed on his students that they must come under divine influences and cherish the spirit of the little child.

‘You must dwell, my young friends, in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty, if the anointing which I trust you have received of Him would abide in you. Nor is this frame beyond the reach of faith. It can be attained not only by students whose chief occupations are all congenial, but by the merchants of the earth, and the hard-working sons of toil.

“There are in this loud-stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th’ everlasting chime ;
Who carry music in their heart,
Thro’ dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.”

‘Be this, gentlemen, the spirit of our teaching and of your learning. Then may the Holy Ghost, irradiating our humble lecture-rooms, glorify Christ alike in teachers and taught. And then, as you leave these walls to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, it will be but to tell your fellow-men of that

Fountain of Life which has been so wondrously opened up in your own souls.'

So highly was the lecture appreciated, even by some who had not been very favourable to the election of Dr. Brown, that two requisitions for its publication were presented to him—one from the students, and the other from some of the leading ministers of the town. With this request Dr. Brown complied.

With three separate subjects to teach, Dr. Brown must have found the work of his first session very arduous, for it is nearly as difficult to handle diverse subjects simultaneously as it is to serve two masters; but he contrived to piece them together to a certain extent, gradually filling them up in future years. How he got through the first session will be seen from a letter to his brother-in-law, William Dyce. He had sent him his introductory lecture, on which the artist had made some rather trifling criticisms:—

'NORTH LODGE, ABERDEEN,
'April 2, 1858.

'MY DEAR WILLIAM,—We shut shop for the session on Wednesday last, and yesterday I routed out an appalling bundle of unanswered letters to clear off. Within the elastic band I find yours, dated December 16, about my *Introductory Lecture*. Your two criticisms are quite correct: one in the requisition in which "it" occurs without the noun to which it refers. It should be "this Lecture." The blunder is a strange one. The other is a misprint, "begin" for "began." Another error pointed out by that man of very fine artistic mind, William Smith, occurs in a stanza from Keble, where the word "human" is twice inserted in one line, when it should be inserted but once.

Speaking of words, have you seen Trench's pamphlet on *Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries*? It is like all he writes, full of thought on minute points, fine sense on those points, and evidence of extensive and well digested reading. The newspapers, I believe, are right in thinking that while the labours of the philological society, of which Trench is probably the Alpha and the Omega, are worthy of all honour, the Dean's idea of a proper English Dictionary is likely to be realised in the same style and period of time with Panizzi's catalogue (I suppose they mean of the British Museum Library).

‘For my own work, I have got through much better than I ventured to expect. I think the plan I took to economise my labour was wise. Believing that of the two classes of students I had to teach (1st year's and 4th year's) it was of much more importance to throw my strength into the work of beginners, whose good or bad start would affect their whole future course, than to spend my labour in perfecting those whose studies were already far advanced, I determined to devote the three months I had from the time of my arrival here till the session began, to the preparation of a thorough course of lectures on *Apologetics* which comes first in our order of study, and to make the first and most careful portion of this course consist of the *Apologetics* of the Gospels, embracing all the questions affecting the historical credibility and divine authority of the Gospels; and as another course I had to teach was the *Exegetics* of the Gospels to 1st and 4th students jointly, I read these *Apologetical* lectures first, as an introduction to this second course; thereby saving myself the necessity of having any other work for 1st year students till these were done, which took me till Christmas. When the year began, I took 1st year students by themselves over the remainder of the *Apologetics* of revealed religion; then backwards to

natural religion, viewed (1st) in relation to Ethics ; (2nd) to Physics ; (3rd) to Metaphysics, which just terminated at the close of the session. The Exegetical class I then took through a course of Biblical and Textual Criticism of the Gospels ; embracing all that relates to the integrity of the text, mss., Ancient Versions, and quotations from Ancient Fathers. Then came the actual reading and exposition of the Greek text of the four Gospels in Tischendorf's Harmonic Arrangement (*Synopsis Evangelica*), beginning this about a fortnight after the session began, but getting on by small degrees till we got through the other three things, when we went on rapidly, although the work was *thorough*, reading straight through all the four Gospels on to about one-fourth part of our Lord's ministry ; taking all after that rapidly to the end. The other class I had was one of Church History from the Reformation downwards, for 4th year students. I discarded old Mosheim (for the first time, I believe, in our Divinity Halls) though recommending them to buy him as useful for reference. I selected Hardwick's *Reformation Manual*, one of the Macmillan series, partly for its far better arrangement than Mosheim's, partly for its excellent selection of notes, and *generally* for its good sense, as well as good condensation. But he did not need to tell us that he viewed all from an "Anglican" point of view. I could not only justify that as a matter of consistency, but find some advantage in taking students over a set of facts from a point of view different from our own. But he is unpardonably one-sided, and perverts the facts ludicrously on some things. However, it just served to raise my "birse" to the indignation-point, and helped me to be the more *eloquent*. Seriously, I think I did the young men some service in liberalising their minds regarding the English Church, while I set myself against some of Hardwick's one-eyed representations. I hope to get

up this summer such a historical course as, while not superseding the need of a text-book, will fill up all blanks and develop difficult questions over those. I am thankful I have never been a day ill, and that my work has left me as much in the spirit of it as at the beginning, though for some three months I must try to work out the remainder of my N. T. for Collins. This is a long, selfish story, but you will not be uninterested in it.

‘Your work in the Academy (Edinburgh) has got a pretty fair appreciation. But how is it that among the forthcoming London paintings none from you are announced? Are you not to be represented there? I saw somebody who spoke as if you were absorbed in Margaret Street Church work. Perhaps that does engross you, and they said, I think—it was something fine. But it would be a pity if you left the other undone.

‘Poor Alexander, I much fear I can hardly manage to hold him on at Oxford till he get a Fellowship, and I *think* he would rather not go in for an India appointment if he could do the other. I am greatly at a loss at present what is proper. His mother is much averse to his going to India.’

In due time Dr. Brown did much to fill up his several courses, of which the following synopsis was given by him in the College Calendar :—

Dr. D. BROWN'S CLASSES.

‘The *Apologetic*, *Exegetical*, and senior *Church History* Classes meet five hours a week each.

‘In *Apologetics* the Professor teaches deductively. Starting from Christianity as a fact, he proceeds from the noontide of the Gospel to the fainter light of early Revelation; and then, with the torch of Revealed truth,

explores the darker regions of Natural Theology, under three divisions—the testimony of *Ethics*, of *Physics*, and of *Metaphysics*—not so much to prove that theism has a foundation in truth, as to establish its scientific principles. In this course, partial use is made of Paley's *Evidences*, Butler, Chalmers, Whewell, Mansel, M'Cosh, etc.

‘As the church limits the Exegetical course to the Exegesis of the Gospels, the Professor has these read in harmony, using as his text-book Tischendorf's *Synopsis Evangelica*. The text is read by the students themselves, who are then questioned on the grammar and exegesis of the passage read. Besides a full Apologetic course of lectures on the Gospels generally, a pretty full introduction to each Gospel is read, with an Excursus from time to time on points of special difficulty or importance, on some of which written exercises are prescribed and minutely criticised, in point both of matter and diction. In this class, a full course of instruction is given on the textual Criticism of the New Testament in general, and of the Gospels in particular; embracing an account of the sources of various readings, a history of the leading mss. and versions of the New Testament, and a statement of the use to be made of citations from the New Testament by the ancient Fathers. The text-books here are Tregelles' volume of *Horne's Introduction, his Account of the Printed Text of the New Testament*, Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, and Hammond's *Outlines of Textual Criticism*.

‘In the Senior *Church History* Course, after some introductory lectures, the rise and progress of the Reformation in Germany are traced, and the principles involved in it—philosophical and theological—illustrated. From the *Saxon* form of it, the Professor proceeds to the *Swiss* movement, tracing the rise, progress, and distinctive features of it, and discussing theologically the merits of

the controversy that eventually separated the Saxon and the Swiss Reformers—including the French as well as the German Reformers of Switzerland. He then comes to the third great stream into which the Reformation movement distributed itself—the *Anglican*. A rapid sketch is next given of the three great *reactionary* measures of the Church of Rome, with the view of recovering its lost ground and extending its domains—the Council of Trent, to consolidate its principles; the Inquisition and other forms of persecution, to repress Protestantism; and the establishment of Missions under the Jesuits, to conquer new territories. Finally, he gives a brief sketch of the Reformation movement, and its features in some of the countries in which Protestantism shaped itself, according to the leading principles of the Swiss Reformation—France, Holland, Scotland, etc. In this Course, partial use is made of Mosheim's, Kurtz's, and Hardwick's histories.

'Besides the daily Exegetical examinations, the Professor examines every three or four days, in the Apologetical and Church History classes on the lectures read.'

To complete our view of Dr. Brown's work as a professor, we add the testimonies of some of his students, regretting that some to whom we have applied for reminiscences of his classes have not been able to comply with our request.

The first is in the form of a letter of sympathy after Dr. Brown's death to his son—David Dyce Brown, M.D., London, from the Rev. James Gray, D.D., the well-known and much-esteemed minister of the Free Church of Scotland at Rome. It brings out a principle of Dr. Brown's, that the true work of a

professor was 'not to cram but to quicken, not to stuff but to stimulate.'

'15th July 1897.

'DEAR DR. DYCE BROWN,—It was with no ordinary feeling of sympathetic interest that I received, on my way home from Italy, the news of the departure of my much-loved professor, and the principal of the college, where I enjoyed, now so many years ago, the great privilege of being under your revered father's instructions. My only regret is that I have not had the opportunity of showing, along with so many others, the high esteem in which he was held by his students, by my presence at his funeral services. I am reminded by the event, of how much I owe to him for the stimulus given me for exegetical study of the Scriptures, and I mourn his departure as one who received much from him in the way of quickening and inspiring influence. Nor do I forget what countenance he gave to several of us at a time when it was far less common than now for students to identify themselves with earnest religious movements, while I have also reason to know that his warm interest in my work on the Continent never grew less from the day that he appeared at Laurencekirk before the Presbytery of Fordoun as representing the Continental Committee, and with a view to my being sent to Naples.

'With you and the other members of the family I cannot but deeply sympathise in the removal from among you of one so eminently useful and so greatly beloved.—Yours most sincerely,

JAS. GORDON GRAY.

Our next reminiscence is kindly contributed by one of his earliest students, the Rev. John Gibb, D.D., Professor in the Theological College, Guildford Street, London :—

‘ It was during the second year of his incumbency of the chair in Aberdeen, that I had the advantage of attending Dr. Brown’s lectures on Biblical Criticism. In saying that these lectures opened up to me an entirely new region of thought, I should, perhaps, explain that in those old-world days, it was not the custom to teach the elements of all the sciences, including Biblical Criticism, to school-boys, or even to undergraduates. My fellow-students and I had studied the classics, mathematics, and philosophy; some had given attention likewise to history and English literature. I had myself studied early Roman history with some care; and I was well read in Niebuhr and Arnold; but it never occurred to me that the Bible, which I looked upon as a book of devotion, could be rightly subjected to the sifting process which Niebuhr and Arnold had applied to Livy. Perhaps I ought to express regret that we had not received a higher instruction in divinity in our early years. I cannot, however, honestly regret the omission; for I still think that alike for scientific and religious reasons, it is best to learn the first lessons of historical criticism through Herodotus and Livy. Be this as it may, our robust ignorance gave the charm of novelty to the professor’s lectures. He introduced us to the textual criticism of the New Testament, of which he was very fond; he also discussed the historical credibility of the Books of the Bible, and examined the external evidence in its favour. He rarely departed from the traditional conclusions, but his methods were distinctly those of the modern historical school; and his manner of presenting the arguments was singularly bright and attractive. I remember with special pleasure his lectures on the Gospels. John the apostle in Ephesus, John the presbyter, Papias and Eusebius were all introduced in a most life-like fashion, and the value of their testimony to the evangelic history appreciated with acute discrimination. I

have had to read much on the subject since those days, and I am not sure that I should now accept all Dr. Brown's conclusions, but his lectures remain in my memory as a remarkably skilful presentation of those dim ecclesiastical figures, and of the literary and theological controversies connected with their names.

'The conditions of Dr. Brown's chair required him to lecture on a wide range of subjects; and it cannot be said that his teaching was always well proportioned and methodical. Like all men of varied knowledge and eager intelligence, who have not been schooled to teaching by long practice, he was rather too fond of digressions, and often we got glimpses only of the proper subject. He was not what we should call in England a good *coach*; and those who desired an orderly *résumé* of facts for examination needs, to save them the trouble of private reading, were not quite satisfied. But he possessed the chief virtue of a professor; he was suggestive and stimulating. Reference was always made in the lectures to the best books on every subject; and those who had the time and inclination to do the necessary amount of private reading, profited greatly by his class. The interest which he aroused came to a great extent from his own vivid interest in his subject, which embraced its religious as well as its scientific aspects. Some of his students I know gained from him an enthusiasm, which they have never lost, for New Testament study. The thoughts he threw out in his rapid, discursive fashion, although it was not easy always to transfer them to the notebook, remained in their memory, and exercised an influence upon their future thinking.

'In private intercourse with Dr. Brown, one was struck with the immense range of his intellectual and spiritual interests. Books of every kind littered his study table; he had no pet subject which he forced upon his visitors.

Whatever subject was started, he was ready to take it up; and his talk was always full of knowledge, and often sparkling with wit. He was fond of introducing anecdotes into his conversation; they were always, however, of a refined and dignified character; he never descended to the lower levels of ministerial jocularity, to which, indeed, he had a strong aversion. When one found him alone, he would speak of the graver sides of religious thought and life. In those days he was to be reckoned among the liberal theologians, not so much in personal opinions as in the temper he exhibited towards thinkers of other schools. He always spoke of them without rancour, and often with genuine admiration. He had himself passed through various phases of religious thought, and he retained a certain liking for some of the rationalistic writers he had read in his youth. Students found no difficulty, therefore, in expressing their views in his presence with perfect candour. He was rather pleased than otherwise, I used to think, to mark traces of independent thought. His own convictions were, however, immovably evangelical. One never detected the slightest symptoms of uncertainty in his own mind. He was willing to give all latitude to the young inquirer, but he never seemed to doubt that he must finally return to the evangelical faith as he himself understood it. This certitude on the part of the professor sometimes disappointed the student, who would have liked his difficulties to be taken more seriously; but he could never complain that his opinions were treated otherwise than with a most kindly and gentle tolerance.'

No man is better qualified to draw the portrait of one who was at once a scholar and a theologian, than Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, the distinguished editor of the *Expositor*, the *British Weekly*, and other literary undertakings.

‘When I attended the Free Church College in Aberdeen, 1870-1874, Dr. David Brown was Professor of Apologetics, the Exegesis of the New Testament, and Church History. There were but three professors in the College—Principal Lumsden, Professor Robertson Smith, then just beginning his wonderful course, and Dr. Brown himself. There were about thirty students, and the classes were necessarily very small. Although other colleges of the Free Church were better equipped, I question whether any of the Aberdeen students of the period have in after life regretted their choice, for their professors were men of extraordinary mark, vigour, and personality. Though the least known of all, Dr. James Lumsden, the Principal, was perhaps the most influential, a true Scottish Christian of the old type, never lacking the courage of his opinions, full of logic, and at the same time full of passion. He had an abiding influence on young men, and on none more than on his colleague, Robertson Smith, who was himself at that time younger than some of his students. Of Robertson Smith nothing need be said. Dr. David Brown was a man whose eagerness and variety of interest, zest, and tenacity of life and varied experience, made him always stimulating to those with whom he was brought into contact.

‘It will be admitted that his range of subjects was much too varied. No man could excel in all the three. Undoubtedly Dr. Brown was most at home in teaching the New Testament. He was a great exegete in his way, competent in scholarship, well acquainted with relative literature, and always with a mind of his own. He had a fine perception of the spiritual, and the ardour of his devotional feeling gave life and freshness to his teaching. He practically confined himself to the Gospels, and their story never seemed to lose its wonder for him. He attended to the side of scholarship, and paid great atten-

tion to textual criticism, ranging himself with Scrivener ; but he was perhaps at his best in showing the vital applications of the narrative. He would say to us, "How would you bring this home to people lying on straw in a barn?" And he certainly taught many men to look at the life of Christ in its bearing on the immediate need of perishing humanity. Dr. Brown was eminently felicitous in the manner of his exposition. He had a real sense of literary style, and he had a well-founded contempt for expositors who did not go beyond the bare letter. In the information he communicated, in the lines of study he suggested, and above all in the spiritual impulse he gave, he was undoubtedly successful in this department of his professorial work. On the other hand, his treatment of Apologetics was somewhat perfunctory. His mind was not interested or peculiarly at home in philosophical questions. Even if it had been, the time allowed for study was too short. In describing his work he used the odd expression, "In Apologetics the professor proceeds backwards." He began with revelation, and worked from it into natural theology, making some use of writers like Mansel and M'Cosh. Of course even in this department he was well worth listening to ; his mind was very acute ; and even on so well worn a subject as Butler's *Analogy* he had some fresh things to say. But the fact is, he did not believe in Apologetics as ordinarily understood. He thought that Christianity was its own apology. He was of those who believed that Christianity can afford to stand speechless in the world's judgment-hall, knowing that its works bear witness to it that it is of God. Dr. Brown was not in the least degree an obscurantist. He had not the slightest fear of scientific study. There was always at the back of his mind a conviction that Christianity could take care of itself, that anything that militated against it must necessarily perish, and that any

necessary modifications on its form and expression would only bring out its larger power and glory. I never heard him speak of theories of evolution as necessarily atheistic, or of their supporters as necessarily unchristian, but his critical sharpness helped him to see the weak points, and I think he had a certain scepticism as to the permanence of all such speculations, a certain disinclination to make terms with them. There is, or was, a tendency among many minds to argue that teachers like Huxley had in certain points brought discussion to an end. Dr. Brown had too wide an acquaintance with the history of thought ever to fall in with this.

‘He might have been a great Professor of Church History if that had been his only subject. Some departments he knew very well indeed. With Luther and Zwingli he was specially conversant, and he never wrote anything better than his crushing replies to Sir William Hamilton. These were full of knowledge, and admirable in expression. But he was not very familiar with other subjects, such as the history of the Early Church, and it was characteristic of him that he had no real enjoyment except in teaching what he really knew well. Of course, a man of his quickness and literary power could easily have composed a course of lectures dealing superficially with the whole history of the church, but his mind did not lie that way. Though he had some very good lectures, and made many interesting remarks in his Church History classes, he was much less happy there than when teaching his own subject of exegesis.

‘The period during which I attended his lectures was a happy one, perhaps one of the best in Dr. Brown’s life. He was then a member of the New Testament Revision Committee, and was in the habit of going up to the meetings. He valued the honour, and relished the work intensely. During those visits he used to stay with Dean

Stanley, and met everybody. On coming back he would tell us much of his experiences, and give us some personal introduction to the great men of the English Church. His temper was always and eminently catholic, and he made close friendships with scholars like Dr. Scrivener. With Dean Stanley he was also on the best of terms, and took a much more favourable view of the Dean's theology than many others. Dr. Martineau was also one of his intimate friends. Dr. Brown distinguished sharply between the theology of the head and the theology of the heart, and was wont to dwell on the emotions with which Martineau would listen to the singing of hymns by Watts and the Wesleys.

'In private life Dr. Brown was exceedingly accessible to his students. He had them at his house, drew them out, and was quick to mark any signs of promise. Few things pleased him more than to be asked to introduce a student to his first congregation. He was good enough to do this service for me, and I gratefully remember the kindness with which it was performed. To country people Dr. Brown's preaching was very acceptable. While plainly the work of a scholar and thinker, it was exceedingly fervent and simple. He was also very happy in his intercourse with the average country officebearer, was quite at home in their houses, and invariably left behind him a strong religious impression.

'It was of course a great recommendation to students that Dr. Brown had wide literary sympathies. He was a contributor to Mr. Strahan's publications, *Good Words* and the *Sunday Magazine*, from the first, and one of the very best contributors. These periodicals were frowned upon by many Free Churchmen at the time, partly because men like Kingsley and Stanley wrote in them, and partly because they contained fiction. Dr. Brown never attempted to discuss the complaints, but went on writing.

'As I look back it seems to me that the truest thing said about Dr. Brown after his death was that he had a "zeal for souls." This came out always. He was anxious to turn out good scholars, and had a keen sense of literary form. But he was far more anxious that his students should be winners of souls. He himself was at home in the best society, and greatly enjoyed it, but I am sure he was never so happy as in revival meetings. His delight in revival hymns, the eagerness with which he threw himself into revival addresses, the patience and tenderness with which he counselled inquirers, characterised him all through his life. There was never any abatement of that zeal; not even the great burden of years, which he had to bear at last, affected it—in fact, his was a fire which the years built up rather than dulled. His heart answered to the last tremulously, tenderly, and eagerly to every expression of personal religious feeling. He had a great and honourable part in all the revival work of his time. It is very uncommon to find a man of this type, a man keenly alive to every movement of criticism and speculative thought, and more keenly alive to the movements of the Spirit of God. He could understand persons who never knew what it was to doubt, and who regarded the whole work of the intellect in matters of religion as mischievous and subversive.

'It is pleasant to think that Dr. Brown's long life, in spite of many conflicts and trials, was a very happy life. His temperament was gay and buoyant, his interests various and keen, and his health elastic. He was very seldom weary or discouraged; he despised people who feared the future, and who were glad because they would not have to cope with coming problems. "I should like," he was wont to say, "to live and to see what these problems are." To him the promise was fulfilled in the deepest, fullest manner, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."'

A communication kindly sent us by a later student, the Rev. James Harvey of Lady Glenorchy's Free Church, Edinburgh, which we have received too late to insert in full, reiterates much that has been said already, but dwells specially on Dr. Brown's personal interest in his students, the pleasure he always had in seeing them at his house, and his great interest in the social meetings for students of all departments held on Saturday evenings.

Besides discharging the duties of his own chair, Dr. Brown, in the activity of his spirit, and eager desire to be of use to students of all departments, opened a class for religious instruction on Sunday evenings, the subject being the internal evidence for Christianity arising from the Gospel of John. Many students in various faculties attended this class, which went on for three sessions, and several have borne strong testimony to its usefulness.

Dr. Brown resigned his professorship in 1887, after holding it for thirty years. Writing on March 27, 1887, to his friend, Dr. Lowrie of America, he said: 'My period of service has been mercifully unbroken throughout, and this session I have enjoyed it as much as ever. But I am not like the Psalmist's oxen, "strong for labour." I have keen life in me still, and hope to do something for my Master when out of harness; for it is sweet to serve Christ on this earth and with this mortal frame, when it was of the Lord's mercies we were not consumed; on this earth, too, where first we tasted the sweetness of peace through the blood of the cross; and to do all the good thereafter that we can.'

CHAPTER IX

HIS VIEW OF AN IDEAL MINISTRY

AMONG the men of varied gifts whom, from the beginning, the Free Church of Scotland has entrusted with the training of her ministers, we know none who aimed more constantly and earnestly at realising her *beau ideal*—at rearing the kind of ministers on whom she has ever set the highest value. Under the guidance of Chalmers, Welsh, Cunningham, and others, who moulded her policy from the first, she has always aimed at a combination of qualities not always found together—fidelity to the doctrines of Holy Scripture, especially as to the way of salvation; intellectual culture and mastery of the great questions of the day; with evangelical fervour and evangelistic earnestness, springing out of a vivid sense of the natural condition of men, and fed continually by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be said that she has been successful in every case in realising this combination, but it will be generally owned that during the first half-century of her separate existence, it was, on the whole, a conspicuous characteristic of her ministry. It is beyond doubt that she led the way in raising the standard of clerical attainment, and it is generally admitted that for learning, she occupies to-day a high rank among the churches. It

is no less obvious that in evangelistic zeal she has exerted a marked and beneficial influence. Nowhere could Moody and Sankey and the other great evangelists of the day have got a more cordial welcome; while among those who have filled her own pulpits or otherwise served her, the Bonars, Alexander Somerville, William Burns, John M'Neil, and many others have been second to none. Whether the next half century will find her equally marked by the same combination, is a question which, with all our anxiety on the subject, we find it difficult to answer. In some quarters a feeling has shown itself that, the old evangelical lines having become ruts, freshness and power are to be looked for in other directions; but any experiment of that kind has afforded little ground for encouragement and little hope of success. There are not wanting indications that we are on the eve of some new outburst of earnestness, as if the sense of what is needed to fight the forces of evil that are mustering around us with such boldness, were reviving the old battle-cries of the church, and throwing men back on the old, old story, which is always fresh when it comes from the heart, and which can still show itself in the future, as in the past, to be the power of God unto salvation. Whether this will be realised must depend, under God, on the spirit of our younger ministers, and especially those of them who are fitted to lead. Surely the aspiration of Chalmers is not unworthy of them—let us have a learned and cultured ministry, but let them remember that they are ambassadors of Christ, and like Cowper's pastor, bound to preach as dying to dying men.

To rear such ministers was Dr. Brown's great aim. In an opening lecture delivered in November 1886, when in his eighty-fourth year, we find him giving very warm expression to his views on the character of the ministry, all the more earnestly because of his impression that he might never again have the chance. On the great ends of the ministry, his trumpet gave no uncertain sound. He solemnly appealed to his students:—

‘You who are now drawing near to the close of your studies here—are earnest views of the work becoming more vivid, or are they fading away, and giving place to the mere professional bearings of it? A high authority says of faithful ministers of Christ, whether pastors of settled flocks, or missionaries among their converts, “They watch *for your souls* as they that must give account, that they may do so with joy and not with grief.” With joy—as the instruments of their conversion, or as having been helpers in their progress in the divine life; with grief—as of those whom they would fain have gathered, but they would not. Well, I say—Have you grasped *that* as the essential feature of your future work, as a *seeking* for souls, a *watching* for souls, that none of them, through you at least, come short of salvation? The apostle Paul was not content with getting a host of converts into a church-state, he looked after them one by one. To one church he says, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”—as if afraid that in some of them the whole thing would have to be done over again. And to another church, speaking of Christ as the hope of glory, he says,

“Whom we preach, warning *every man* and teaching *every man* in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ, whereunto I labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.” Yes, gentlemen, to be “fishers of men” is to be your business, drawing them out of an element in which their immortal nature will be choked out. “Compel them to come in”—is to be your errand; not, tell them the way in; not, invite them in, but *get* them in, and see them in by the evident fruits of it. “He that winneth souls is wise,” and every soul won by you will be your “crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

‘But mistake me not. Conversion is not everything. Some drive at that and nothing else. Revival preachers, such as have that especial faculty, are a great gift to the church, and they have their reward—a great one. But few of them have at the same time the faculty to *feed* their own converts. Now, the new birth, though the first thing, is only entrance into the family of God. So long as they are but “new-born babes” they can digest only the milk of the Word; but after they become young men, and at length fathers, they must get strong meat; and if you have not that to give them, if you keep dealing out to them only the milk, the old thing which they relished indeed and grew upon when they *were* babes, you will make them feel that they are put off with slops and have to leave you. The Christian life, to be robust and fruitful, requires fresh and varied instruction—things new as well as old. You must be able to open the Scriptures as a progressive revelation

of the system of grace, from its morning dawn to its noonday brightness under the Gospel. So that if your devout people are crying, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," they may feel that they are getting this through you. And what you thus open up to them, you must be able to apply to the everyday life of your own time, to let them see that the Bible is not an antiquated book about people and things that have passed away, but what Stephen calls it, the lively, living oracles, having a never dying power, a vernal freshness, as if it came just wet from the press, as my friend Dr. Duncan used to express it.'

Thus Dr. Brown laid his foundation; this was his central position, and the comprehensiveness of his mind was shown in the kind and character of the supplementary qualifications which he desired to see added.

Thus he strongly urged them to cultivate a good literary style. Scorning the absurd view of a cultivated style in which some good men have indulged, as if it were akin to the work of the dandy elaborating his dress, or of the lady's maid decking her mistress with jewelry, instead of a means of powerful utterance, he exhorts them—

'Study your own language, to enable you to speak it and write it with purity, simplicity, vigour, and power. For this purpose, read critically the best prose works, in which our language is rich, and its best poetry, that your style, instead of being stiff, and hard, and dry, may flow easily, and be lighted up with some power of illustration from every field. Only let none of these subsidiary studies steal away

precious time from those which are indispensable. *A little at a time* for any of those accessory studies is the great secret of success in them, and when one does succeed in this it is wonderful what stores may be gathered into your notebooks—which you should never be without.’

From style he proceeds to give a much needed counsel on the management of the voice. As one who has had some experience in teaching homiletical and pastoral theology, the present writer feels bound strongly to emphasise this line of advice. Of all the delusions of the ordinary run of Scottish divinity students, one of the greatest and most common is, that they can speak and read English. It would be hard to say how much trouble and even torture one suffers from the indistinctness, the slurring over of syllables, the coarseness of pronunciation, the harshness and huskiness of utterance, especially of young men who have not been brought up among cultivated people, and who, all unconsciously, have fallen into uncouth and illiterate modes of speech. Surely if there be room anywhere for making two talents four, or five ten, it is in dealing with that organ of marvellous capacity—the human voice.

But let us hear Dr. Brown. After dwelling on the fact that oral teaching addressed indiscriminately to all classes is peculiar to the religion of the Bible, and that even when God’s message was committed to books, there was always a living, prophetic ministry, so that He ‘who at sundry times and in divers manners *spoke* to the fathers in time past by the prophets, did in these last days *speak* to us by His Son,’ and in apostolic

times the epistles and other books were directed to be 'read unto all the holy brethren,' he proceeds to speak of the organ by which this is to be accomplished.

'The voice, then, gentlemen, being your instrument, it is of the utmost importance that you be able to "play well" on that instrument. How Demosthenes so trained his voice as to sway well the fierce democracy of Greece you all know; and who does not know how in modern times the human voice can be trained to rivet and hold spell-bound any audience, whether at the bar, or on the platform, or in the senate? But you have a secret of influence to which the bar, the senate-house, and every merely secular arena is a stranger. You bring with you a message from heaven; you address men on their eternal interests; you appeal to their conscience in the sight of God. You know how the great apostle whom we have already named realised this; how contrasting himself with popularity hunters he says, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Well, this will be your strength too. If you are able to rise in any good degree above the critical judgment of your audience and with the truth of God on your lips, to get straight to the consciences of your hearers, you may depend on having their conscience on your side, for *it* is always on God's side.

'But to do this effectively, you must articulate every word distinctly, speak so deliberately that every one may be able to follow you, and especially, eschew

monotony, which will ruin the effect of the best sermon. Give full volume to your voice, and above all *be natural*. Speak to your audience as if you were talking to each one before you. But beware of a put-on, an artificial naturalness. Elocution teachers all tell you that; but their rules are sometimes so carried out that speaking is converted into an art, which is the least impressive of all kinds of utterance. Let every one be himself, and if he be so, people will hardly observe what kind of manner he has.'

But on such a topic Dr. Brown well knew that a living model is better than the most complete series of instructions. So he bids them accompany him to a vast building on the south side of London, and hear what the voice can do. But once they are there he finds many more things for them to learn,—things connected with the very soul and essence of the public service of God.

'A few weeks ago I worshipped in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, not for the first time. A rare sight it was—some five thousand worshippers, a large number of them men of the intelligent class that are now coming to the front to have an influential voice in public affairs. *There* was a man, standing on a platform, with a modest table at his side and a Bible placed on it, and himself with no clerical habiliments. Yet from first to last he was listened to with breathless attention. In the singing of the hymns what a volume of sound arose, making one feel it is good to be here! And what prayers! simplicity itself, but how reverential; it was *talking to God*, telling Him what we felt in His presence, what we wanted from Him, and

also what we expected, and all in that name which is above every name. I say nothing about his sermons, the character of which every one knows, save that every one felt as if they were addressed to himself or herself in particular. But what I referred to this preacher for just now was, the bell-like clearness with which he articulated every word to the close of the sentence. I myself, whose hearing is so imperfect, heard every word. This, of course, in so vast a building was indispensable to his being heard at all; but it was done with no apparent effort; there was no shouting. He simply stood upright, spoke straight out, possessed by his subject, and intent only on lodging it in his hearers. No elocution lesson had he ever received—it was nature itself. He had something to say to that vast audience, and had braced himself up to say it effectively. But he had been with God ere he came there, along with two or three of his officebearers on their knees in an adjoining room.’

There was another danger against which he desired to warn his students. It was that of allowing the current of spiritual life to be dried up through uninterrupted engrossment with study.

‘You have seen a butterfly; when that soft, downy covering, which is its protection and strength, has got rubbed off, how it lies weak, and languishes. Well, there is (as a friend of mine once expressed it to me) over spiritual life an outer covering, which he called “the peachy down of it,” which is easily rubbed off, leaving it open to every sinister influence. That spiritual life, as it is divine in its source, so it breathes by continuous communion therewith; or, as the beloved

disciple expresses it, "by fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." When this is interrupted it is like the stoppage of the breath. If Christ is the vine and we are the branches, we must abide in Him, and let Him abide in us if we would be found in Him when He comes. He must have, so to speak, the freedom of the house, to walk through every corner of it, so that His jealous eye may not be repelled by anything unwholesome. But how is this to be maintained in the midst of hard study from day to day ?'

To this question Dr. Brown preferred to give a practical answer. He summoned an old friend to his side, and got him to take up his parable.

'Archbishop Leighton was a good specimen of fine scholarship and high spirituality. But for students I think a better model is to be found in John Albert Bengel, the author of that critical work which has never been superseded—the *Gnomon of the New Testament*, the fruit of precious years of New Testament teaching at Denkendorf. He was constantly digging in his Hebrew Bible (which even when a student he had read through once or twice) and in his Greek Testament, out of which he was intent on extracting the most delicate shades and fibres of thought which it conveyed. And when he took to textual criticism, being staggered at first by its various readings, he determined never to rest till he could get to the bottom of the subject, and he devoted to it his days and nights until he was able to issue his critical edition of the Greek Testament, and with it his *Apparatus Criticus*, the most masterly production of that period. But did these wearing-out studies dry up his spiritual life ?

Never. Every page, and almost every verse, of that *Gnomon* of his bears witness to the spirituality which he carried into all his studies by the *unction* which they breathe. The hymns, with the composition of which he relieved his perplexing studies in textual criticism and refreshed his spirit, bear witness to his constant jealousy over himself, as if his aspiration ever were, "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!" He seemed, indeed, to live in prayer; and his students, who lived under the same roof with himself, used to say that those short breathings of prayer with which he met them in the morning for class-work were "like morning dew." And to the last this was his frame. [An anecdote I have heard of his last hours, illustrating his microscopic way of observing the very words of his Greek Testament, makes one almost smile. When he was dying, he quoted those well-known words of the apostle, in the immediate prospect of his death by Nero, "I know whom I have believed," etc., and then said to the bystanders, "The apostle (you see) wouldn't let even a preposition come in between himself and his Lord; for he doesn't say, I know UPON whom" (*εἰς ὃν*), but "I know WHOM I have believed" (*οἶδα γὰρ ᾧ πεπίστευκα*)—the eye of his faith resting on the glorious OBJECT to whom he had ever trusted his all."]

Summing up his counsels, Dr. Brown earnestly urged on his students the devotional reading of the Scriptures and kindred objects. And no one can fail to observe the richness and readiness of his store of illustration for the various points on which he touched, so very rare in a man of eighty-three.

'Well, gentlemen, there is a model for you. One of

the best ways of keeping up the tone of your spiritual life in the midst of hard study is the *devotional study of your Bible*; and I apply this to preachers as well as you who are but preparing for that work. It has been noticed of some students in all our Halls that the book they seem least to know is their Bible. So immersed are they in book-work and paper-work, that taking it for granted that they can go to their Bible at any time, they go to it for devotional purposes at no time. The consequence of it is that when they do preach they misquote their Bible, and those hearers who know their Bible best detect this, and it takes them down at once in their regard. It used to be remarked of the late Dr. Begg, even by those who had least sympathy with him in other things, that here he was singularly at home, his rich illustrations from apt passages of Scripture being one of the secrets of his popularity as a preacher. Well, not only to read but to *study* your Bible *devotionally*, you should have some system in it, and stick to it. Take, say, *one book*—one of the five books of the *Psalter* for the Old Testament, or an *Epistle* for the New. Read it first through till you grasp the gist or general scope of it, and then take it up in detail, verse by verse, with the original by you. And as this will take up time, and time is precious for students, be content with *a very little at a time* (for if you aim at too much at once, you will soon give it up). Only throw your spirit into that little, were it but a *snatch*, and try to fetch the *sap* out of that little, and you will find your spirit braced up, and go fresh to your books and papers, losing nothing, but gaining much. My friend, Mr. Moule, Principal of Ridley

Hall, Cambridge, is a man who, to superior classical scholarship, adds a high spiritual tone, and whose little book on *Christian Sanctity* is having, I am glad to know, a great sale. Well, at the late congress of clergy and other friends of the English Church at Wakefield, he read a paper on *The Devotional Study of Scripture*, a subject which no one was better fitted to handle. In this paper he not only urges the adoption of *system* in studying the Bible devotionally, but he gives the outlines of a plan for doing it, and a specimen of the way it may be profitably carried out.

‘But there are other ways of keeping up the tone of your spiritual life. Let me mention two. One is to have some book of choice religious biography always by you, and at present we are rich in that kind of provender. A student at one of our Halls, now a professor and an author of standing, once told me that the lectures of one of his professors were of so polemical a character from day to day, that to escape from that unwholesome atmosphere he had to betake himself to some work of religious biography, which he took care to have upon his table, else he might have been tempted to think all theology but a wrangle of disputants. Among works of this kind need I recommend the *Lives of Luther and Calvin*, of some of the greatest Puritan writers, of Wesley and Whitfield, of Judson and Wilson, and Duff and Carey, and of our great Chalmers.

‘The other help I refer to is visiting some bedfast Christian, or some one whom you would fain help to make a Christian. In converse with the one you may take such sweet counsel together that your sick friend,

on your departure, may feel so refreshed as to say to him- or herself, verily, "some *have* entertained angels unawares." With the other you may be helped to leave indelible impressions. My late friend, Professor Eadie, of the United Presbyterian Hall, once said to a friend of mine, that nothing did him more good, when worried with study, than to break off and rush away to talk and pray with some bedfast member of his congregation. And what to students is more significant, I think, is a circumstance which I was once told of one I am now obliged to call the late Dr. Fleming Stevenson, whose loss to his own church is a loss to the church of Christ. When he finished his theological studies at home, he went abroad to study at Halle under the profound Julius Müller; but, on his return home in order to take licence, he did not feel himself free to sign the Confession of Faith—not that he was prepared to deny its theology, but that many things were there expressed in a form different from the light in which he then viewed them. In his perplexity he consulted a friend, who advised him to let the whole subject alone for a while, and go and work mission work in connection with some congregation. In this work he got so interested, dealing with the various classes of the people—the sick, the indifferent, the Christians, and the no Christians, that the cobwebs disappeared, and his difficulties vanished, and never returned. And we know what he lived to become, insomuch that immediately after his interment, but a few weeks ago, a large meeting of the most distinguished members of the church to which he belonged, both clerical and lay, met, and resolved to aim at raising £10,000 for a monument to his memory.'

So much for the lecture to the students. By way of corollary, and as exemplifying the regard he had to careful scholarship and culture along with spiritual fervour, as helps to the spread of the Gospel, it may be added that he warmly approved of the method of educational missions in India with which the Free Church has been so closely identified. The subject was discussed at the Missionary Conference at London in 1888, and Dr. Brown thus delivered his views:—

‘The question is, Is a man having a passion for souls to object to being put into the teaching department? Very far from that. Let me tell you what I said to a student of my own who is now in Bombay. He was one of the most distinguished students of the Hall in which I was then a professor. I said to him, “My dear man, what are you going out for? Are you going out to teach, say, geography, Latin, English?” “God forbid,” he said. “Well, then,” I said, “let me tell you what to do. Every morning before you go to school, go on your knees and say to God, ‘Lord, I have not come here to teach Latin, geography, English, and other things, but to get the souls of these fellow-creatures. But I must first gain their respect, and then I must gain their confidence, and then I must gain their affection. But every day let me drive at that object, and I will find opportunities in twenty ways to gain them.’” General Alexander, a noble character, who, though a Presbyterian in principle, was a director of the Church Missionary Society, which he loved, and which I love, said to me one day in a church where we met, “O Dr. Brown, your missionaries and ministers are going to work in the wrong way.” “Well, let me hear you,

General." "Oh," said he, "when John Anderson went out to gain the souls of the people, he said he could and he would have them, and he insisted on having them; and he said, 'I am certain to have them,' and he got them. The noblest high caste youths in the south of India were his converts. There was Rajah Gopal and Venkataramia, and not a few others. And now what are our missionaries doing? They are trying to beat the Government in educational matters, and now they have no baptisms." "Well," I said, "General, you are wrong. Education is a necessity, and they must go at it; but if there is any failure, it is not in what they are teaching, but in what they are aiming at. If there is a want of that passion to get the souls of the people, they will not get them; if they put the cart before the horse, or the means before the end, they won't get the fruit. Do not object to the thing they are doing, but object only to the way in which they may be doing it. I do not know that they are doing it in the wrong way. But what I say is, Let them aim at conversion; and remember that they are 'never to rest until they get it, and they are sure to get it.'"¹

¹ See *Report of the Centenary Missionary Conference, London, 1888.*

CHAPTER X

HELP IN CHRISTIAN WORK

‘ABOUT the close of the sixth decade of the century, there was a mysterious spiritual susceptibility abroad in different parts of the world ; and notably in America, Ireland, and Scotland, men in large numbers were brought under the power of the world to come to a degree that astonished and rebuked the formalism of Christendom.’

We quote these words from Dr. Stark’s *Lights of the North*, one of the chapters of which is devoted to the Revival in Aberdeen. The movement began in the United States, following a terrible commercial crisis there, when a multitude of banks and commercial firms lay in ruins, as if smashed by a cyclone, and all who had set their hearts on the riches of this world were stunned, rebuked, and for the time paralysed. From the United States the movement seemed to spread to the north of Ireland, and from the north of Ireland it came to Scotland.

In Aberdeen, among its pioneers, were Mr. Duncan Mathieson and Mr. M’Dowall Grant of Arndilly, but the evangelist under whom it attained its fullest development was Mr. Reginald Radcliffe of Liverpool, who came to Aberdeen in November 1858. In looking

at him and listening to him, observes Dr. Stark, it was at first difficult to account for his power—he was so quiet and unobtrusive. There was no outward display, not even eloquence. He had not the intellectual robustness of some of his coadjutors, Mr. Brownlow North, for example, yet no man in such a short time ever so drew and stirred Aberdeen, or led so many to ask, What shall we do? His main power lay in a great degree in his self effacement, and from his finding that by prayer meetings and otherwise, Aberdeen had been in some degree prepared for his appeals. Not a few of his converts stood the test of time, and are now earnest Christian workers.

Of Professor Brown we may say that from the first he appreciated the divine elements in this movement, and felt it not only to be lawful, but eminently binding on him, as a theological professor, to give it what countenance and guidance he could. For he was removed as far as possible from the cloistered professor, who sits all day in his study, revolving and investigating problems of philosophy and theology, without a thought of the world around him lying in wickedness, or an endeavour to rouse his students to grapple with its sad condition. He felt that the work of dealing with souls, and urging men to decide for Christ, was the very consummation of that process of training men for the ministry in which he and other theological professors were engaged. If the instruments of revival work were comparatively unlearned and unscholarly men, this was only an example of God's way of choosing the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and the foolish things of the world to confound the

things that were wise, that no flesh might glory in His presence. Theological study was not an unmixed benefit; it often blinded men to the real ends of the ministry, and weakened, if it did not obliterate, their sense of the indispensable need of divine power to make appeals effectual in turning men to God. Practical interest in revival work would serve to counteract this tendency; it would bring students face to face with the grand purpose of the ministry; and it would give them practical and powerful evidence of its true spirit, and of the secret of success. He was as far as possible from sympathising with those who disparage theological study, as if it were rather a hindrance than a help to spiritual earnestness; he was constantly aiming at bringing both together, and constantly urging his students to seek that combination of them that had been so eminently realised by men like Bengel. At first Dr. Brown stood almost alone among his ministerial brethren in the countenance he gave to the revival. The clergy generally were shy and somewhat distrustful; the only one among them who took the cause up warmly was the Rev. Mr. Smith, of the Greyfriars' Established Church. With Mr. Smith it fared worse than with Dr. Brown. Some of his clerical brethren thought it actually wrong, and inconsistent with the constitution of the Church of Scotland, that laymen should be allowed to address religious meetings in churches, and for doing so he had to run the gauntlet of the church courts. Dr. Norman Macleod's view of the case was very notable. 'Many laws,' he said, 'were tolerable only when they had liberty occasionally to break them; and when there was such a want of

spiritual life, this was not a time for the General Assembly to spend a night in censuring a minister because he permitted a layman to preach the Gospel from a pulpit.¹ No attempt was ever made to stop Dr. Brown by ecclesiastical order, but he underwent a considerable amount of unfriendly criticism and social disparagement for the countenance he gave to these unauthorised preachers. His defence was that they had a higher seal than the mere authority of men could give them; that their case was exceptional, and ought to be recognised as exceptional, seeing that their labours bore such blessed fruit. No man could have been further from thinking that every man who could give a good evangelistic address ought to be recognised by the churches as a minister of Christ. For ordinary men the way to the ministry was through the Divinity Hall; it was only men of quite exceptional qualifications, men who had manifestly been successful in turning sinners to God, that ought to be allowed or encouraged to plead publicly with sinners as ambassadors for Christ.

And very good reason he had for claiming that the work of Mr. Radcliffe and others was recognised of God. About thirteen years after Mr. Radcliffe's visit, a minister, who had been commissioned to visit Aberdeen, in reporting to the Free Church Assembly on the state of religion there, remarked that the work of Mr. Radcliffe among the young in 1858-59 must have been very profound and widespread, as he had met many decided Christians in the city who had been converted at that time. Dr. Brown, who was present, rose up and said that he had been in the very

¹ Quoted by Dr. Stark in *Lights of the North*.

thick of that work, and could testify to its thoroughness and its good results. He added that a member of that General Assembly, one who had taken an active part in its business, began his Christian career under the influence of that movement. He referred to the late Mr. James Garden, an Aberdeen lawyer, whose early death, when he had attained a high position as a man of business, and seemed at the threshold of a career of singular usefulness as a Christian layman, was felt by all to be one of the heaviest blows that could have fallen on his church and the community. Dr. Brown had other reasons for looking back with thankfulness to that period, for a blessing had come likewise into his own house. But it was impossible that lukewarm men should be thoroughly pleased at the attitude he had taken, seeing it could not but rebuke their own supineness.

While rejoicing in the fruits of this early movement, Dr. Brown was aware that it was not unattended with certain risks, and he took an important step to obviate these, and secure the permanence of the impressions that had been made. There were two tendencies often found among young converts that needed consideration. In the first place, the ordinary services of our churches did not quite satisfy them; they were too formal and cold, and deficient in that social element which is so attractive to persons in their circumstances. And in the second place, under the warm play of the emotions at a revival time, there was some danger of forgetting the need of accurate knowledge; religion might become a mere matter of feeling instead of the product of mind and heart united, and

a mollusious type of Christianity might come to be substituted for the strong. To remedy these possible evils, he began a meeting every Sunday morning in a school in Marywell Street at a quarter to ten o'clock, an hour that could not interfere with public worship. For twelve years he presided over this meeting, using all the pains he could to make it useful for its purpose. Nor did he give it up until such a change had taken place in the tone of some of the congregations as seemed to show that it was no longer required. He took a great interest, too, in the noon prayer meeting, and latterly made a point of going every Monday, when 'intelligence of the Lord's work' was the subject. The week of universal prayer in the first week of every succeeding year he carefully observed, always presiding on one of the days. He was present for the last time in 1895.

When Moody and Sankey visited Aberdeen, Dr. Brown was one of their most efficient allies; indeed there was no one to whom earnest evangelists so readily betook themselves when they looked for counsel and encouragement. He had a strong regard, too, for Richard Weaver; and afterwards in 1896, when the Free Church Presbytery had invited his two sons to hold a united mission there, and one called to see him, he turned the gas fully up to see whether he was like 'Richard,' and after prayer in tones full of the tenderest emotion, he said to him, 'Young man, take a message from an old Christian; never forget communion with God! Never forget communion with God!'

The warmth of his interest in such work brought him into friendly contact with several gentlemen of the

county who had themselves been profoundly impressed by religion and the obligation to spread the Gospel. Among these were Mr. Gordon of Parkhill, the Earl of Kintore, Lord Haddo, afterwards Earl of Aberdeen, Mr. M'Dowall Grant of Arndilly, and Mr. Brownlow North. There was now quite a chain of evangelistic posts along the northern counties held by laymen of such rank and ability that the work could not but command the attention of the community. This was a great contrast to what had prevailed in Dr. Brown's earlier years. And for the most part he won not only the respect, but the love and friendship of these noble-men and gentlemen. With Lord Kintore and Lord Aberdeen he was on terms of great intimacy and warm, brotherly fellowship.

Among the religious societies with which he was specially identified, a very prominent place is due to the National Bible Society of Scotland. His services there, and the gratitude with which they were received, are brought out in the minutes of the local auxiliary board.

'The directors have to record the removal by death since their last meeting of one of their number, the venerable Rev. David Brown, D.D., Principal of the Aberdeen Free Church College. Dr. Brown had, for many years, taken a warm and active interest in the affairs of the National Bible Society, and at the time of his death was president of this local auxiliary. The directors desire to put on record their sense of the loss sustained, and also an expression of their sympathy with the bereaved relatives.'

The Evangelical Alliance, of which he was one of

the founders, was a subject of great interest to Dr. Brown. He liked the idea of it,—a union of individual Christians of many branches of the Church of Christ, and he greatly enjoyed the converse and communion of brethren, whenever he had an opportunity of meeting with them. For he was one of those outspoken men, of open heart and kindly manner, that easily make friends, and have the knack of keeping up acquaintance with them after the first meetings have passed away. At some of the meetings of the Alliance he rendered substantial assistance; of his contributions a separate print was made of one, presented at the meeting at Ryde in 1886, while he was in his eighty-fourth year, on the subject of modern scepticism. It is a delineation of various forms of unbelief which have been drawing to them many serious men and women in our day, who, through dislike of the supernatural or other causes, have slipped from their moorings and tried to find a refuge in the anti-supernatural. It does not spare the higher criticism for subverting faith in the Bible. It sounds a warning note against Dean Farrar's view of the atonement, and very loudly against his *Eternal Hope*. It presses Bishop Butler's great refuge on all who are staggered by difficulties—'we do not know the whole case'—and with reference to those who deemed the pulpit extinct, as an instrument of spreading truth and interesting men, he urges that the secret of power is the same as ever—'Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.'

So also he took a lively interest in the 'Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the world, holding the Presbyterian' system, and was a member of the third

General Council held at Belfast in 1888. It had a special interest for him, not only in its main object, but as giving him an opportunity of making the acquaintance of many American and Continental brethren. For he delighted in all that was fitted to draw the churches into closer fellowship, interest them more in their work, promote mutual affection and regard, and stimulate to more earnest and efficient co-operation in the great work of the Lord.

Dr. Brown was prevented by various considerations from indulging often in visits to foreign countries. In 1867, however, he went with his family to Switzerland. On that occasion he was asked by the Continental Committee to advise them as to towns frequented by summer visitors where it would be desirable to form stations for Presbyterian worship. To this request he readily assented. Some of the places which he visited were already occupied by other Presbyterian churches, and these, of course, he passed over. But two places in Switzerland seemed eminently fitted for Presbyterian services—Interlaken and Lucerne. At Interlaken, before Dr. Brown's arrival, the use of the parish church of Unterseen had been obtained, and one service had been held there, by the Rev. Malcolm White, Innellan. But the situation of the church was inconvenient, being out of the way of the hotels, and the hour, twelve o'clock, was unsuitable; it was therefore urged on Dr. Brown that he should endeavour to find a better place of meeting. Already, within the buildings of the Kloster or Schloss, accommodation had been provided both for the Roman Catholics and the Church of England, and it was suggested that possibly

the Free Church of Scotland might be accommodated in the Sacristy. The situation was admirable, but the darkness of the apartment seemed to render it unsuitable; this obstacle, however, might be overcome by slapping the walls and introducing windows. Dr. Brown accordingly made application to the Bernese Government for this chamber, undertaking to provide the whole expense of fitting it for public worship, if something like continuity of occupation could be relied on. He informed the government that the doctrine of the Free Church agreed with that of the Heidelberg Catechism, and that in government they were Presbyterian like themselves. His application was backed by the prefect, and in due time the application was complied with. The obtaining of architectural plans and building contracts, and the general superintendence of the repairs, had to be seen to by Dr. Brown, and likewise the raising of the necessary funds. Even when swelled by several additions not anticipated at first, the cost was moderate; the whole sum was defrayed, and the apartment, which now forms a delightful little chapel, fitted up in a most suitable way. Dr. Brown returned the following season, and had a term of service in the building which he had secured and adapted, and to which there had been added a comfortable vestry. Among the friends to whose aid he was most indebted for this important service, two were entitled to special notice—Mr. J. J. Bischofberger, a teacher in the highest public school; and Mr., afterwards Sir, William Mackinnon, so well known both in connection with his line of steamers in India, and his commercial and evangelistic operations in Africa. Mr. Mackinnon not

only contributed a sum of money on behalf of the poor of Unterseen, as an acknowledgment of the kindness of the minister and congregation in granting the use of their church for the season of 1867, but also became security to the builder for the payment of his Schloss contract, and contributed moreover a handsome sum towards the fund for repairing the Sacristy. Sir William, as is well known, was a strong opponent of deviations from the traditional forms and modes of Presbyterian worship, and would have defrayed the entire cost, could he have obtained security that only psalms would be sung within the walls !

Many have worshipped during these thirty years in the Free Church of Interlaken with great outward comfort and much spiritual edification. The use of the chapel has been readily given by the government all these years, and any who have worshipped in it, and may read these pages, if they have been hitherto ignorant of its history, will feel that they owe something to the sagacity and enterprise of Dr. Brown, who conceived and accomplished its adaptation to its present use.

The history of the station of Lucerne has also an interest of its own. It was while Dr. Brown was officiating in 1867 at Interlaken that he was urged by two gentlemen, a Scotsman and an American, to open a station at Lucerne, where so many English travellers came to see the beautiful Lake of the Four Cantons and ascend the Rigi. Little could be done during that season but to hold worship in the small *salon* of the Hotel de Cygne with about a dozen people, but before another season Dr. Brown and the Rev. Mr. M'Morran of Dunoon resolved to try to make better provision.

The history of what followed we give in Dr. Brown's own words, from the Report which he presented to the Continental Committee:—

‘ Having learned that one of the canons of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Herr Suter, was a liberal man, a scholar, and at home in English, and that he had formerly secured one of their churches for the English service, ere they arranged to hire the use of the German church, we got an introduction to him, and found him most polite, offering to call with us on the chief magistrate (president also of the canton), and giving us reason to believe that we should get the use not of the church which would have best suited us, which the priests would have resisted, but of the same church which had been used for the English service. We accordingly saw the chief magistrate, who, on learning our object, said, that if we would send him our request in writing, he would himself present and support it at a meeting to be held two days thereafter. At Mr. M‘Morran’s request I wrote out the petition, but made him sign it, as the officiating minister, adding my own name and designation. In a few days I received an official reply, granting us all we asked, namely, the use of the Maria Hilf Church for four summer months, June to September inclusive, for the hours of eleven to half-past twelve noon, and six to half-past seven evening, each Sunday.

‘ The amusing sequel to this may as well be here recorded. Said Herr Suter to me one day, “ The Pro-Legate of the Pope happens to be here just now, and it may be as well to get his consent, which I have no doubt he will give, and if you will come with me, I will introduce you to him ” ; so I went with him to that department of the Dom where he was staying. The gentleman was not of prepossessing appearance, but received me politely, and shook hands. My friend then mumbled, half in a

whisper, what he had to say, and to ask what we desired, to which the gentleman replied smilingly and curtly, whereupon we shook hands again and parted. On coming away I said, "What did he say to you?" He said, "If you ask leave, I can't give it you; but if you don't ask, I'll say nothing."

'Ere the service began in 1868, cards were printed and posted up in all the hotels, and metal posters were affixed to suitable places leading to the church, with the name of the church, the name of the religious body worshipping there, and the hours of service. Every attention was paid to our wishes. For example, at our request, an altar cloth was every Sunday morning brought from a distance to cover the high altar, and the most staring of their images were covered, until our service was over, then they were unveiled. Latterly, however, the officiating ministers seem not to have cared to have this done; for on my coming to officiate once more in 1880, I found everything exposed, and did not press to have the former practice restored.'

The 'Maria Hilf' continued to be used for many years for Presbyterian worship. But interesting though it was to have the Gospel proclaimed in its simplicity and fulness amid the marks of Romish corruption, the place was not conducive to that spiritual frame of mind in which it becomes us to worship God who is a Spirit, and who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Of late years the Presbyterian service has been held in the hall adjacent to the church.

When at Lucerne, Dr. Brown had many a talk and walk with Herr Suter, the canon of the cathedral, which that gentleman accepted with gratitude.

Of the many services which Dr. Brown was constantly

rendering to his brethren, we have no room to write minutely. He was fond of preaching, and till he was weakened by an accident a few years before his death (see chapter xxii.), he was constantly engaged in it, as a labour of love. He felt that he could let his heart out in the pulpit, and he never preached without urging sinners to come to Christ. Sometimes he would occupy a pulpit for several weeks, as in 1859 at Braemar, when the minister, Mr. Cobban, was in America. As he advanced in life, he seemed to lead his hearers (when sympathetic) into new fields of spiritual vision and experience, and to portray what other eyes had not seen. And his prayers, for which he had a great gift, became more and more breathings of his soul into the ear of God, as if close to Him, and talking to Him, till sometimes he seemed to enter within the very holy of holies. In 1892, when in his eighty-ninth year, he was asked to preach the funeral sermon of Dr. Donald Fraser, at Inverness, and he complied with the request, though in the month of February, with snow lying on the ground. The subject of his sermon was the penitent robber and the Lord of glory on the cross. A few times he preached after his accident; at a communion service he addressed a table, and when not able for farther duty, he pronounced the benediction, still doing what he could, and, like John Knox, serving his master 'with his glad heart and dying hand.'

While thus giving his services most willingly far and near, he was very specially helpful to the congregation of which he was a member and an officebearer—the South Free Church of Aberdeen. In the memorial minute of the Kirk-Session it is said: 'The Kirk

Session and congregation had a closer fellowship and a larger association with him than was the privilege of almost any other society of men, and theirs is the greater bereavement. For forty years he has been a member and an elder of the congregation, and from the first he gave to its work and worship an unfaltering loyalty, which became the devotion of an ardent affection, and he discharged the duties of his office with characteristic care and fidelity. He was thrice Moderator of the Kirk-Session during vacancies in the pastorate, and he guided and served the congregation with prudent and sympathetic service. His accurate scholarship in the deep things of God, his ripe Christian experience, his zeal for souls, his devotion to Christ, and his spotless life with its mellowing grace and gentleness, were an alluring example to young and old, and added a lustre to the Christian life. His constant presence in the house of God, where in later years his illumined face and hoar head were a message of righteousness, his unique attendance at the Lord's table, not once absent in forty years, and his eager interest in all the work of the Kirk-Session, and especially in the young communicants admitted by them, are grateful and inspiring memories. They place on special record the fact that it was by the prayer of his lips the new church was consecrated to God, and they rejoice in his long testimony to the power of the grace of God, and in his quietly falling into that sleep which is the last earthly gift of God.'

Such a testimony is honourable alike to those who paid it, and to him who received it. The present writer is old enough to remember the long roll of de-

voted and able pastors in this congregation—James Bryce, William Leith, Alexander Davidson, William Tweedie, James Stewart, John Bonar, John Adam, John Sloan, George Knight, William Clow. All of them contributed something to its edification, and helped to stamp its high character on it; and though Dr. Brown was never its pastor, he too had no small share in moulding it, and infusing into it the fine spirit that breathes so warmly in its memorial-tribute.

It will easily be believed that much that might be recorded under this head has to be left out in such a Memoir as this. Whatever else might be said of Dr. Brown, it could never be said that he was wanting in interest in public religious movements. It is notorious that he was ready for every good work, and some would say that he gave to outside objects part of the time that might have been better employed in systematising and completing his college work. His heart was so large that he could not withhold his hand whenever his feelings claimed its help.

CHAPTER XI

DEATH OF HIS ELDEST SON

Crushed Hopes Crowned in Death is the title of the 'In Memoriam' volume in which Dr. Brown put on record what he deemed memorable and instructive in the short life of his son Alexander, a youth of singular precocity and promise. While it draws the portrait of the boy, it at the same time shows so clearly the heart of the father, and the spirit that ruled his home, that our delineation of Dr. Brown would be incomplete if we did not avail ourselves of its help. Dr. Brown was fully sensible of the disadvantage at which a father writes of his son. Though mainly a record of facts, the book has all the glow of affection and admiration natural to a father with his feelings heightened to intensity by the early and unexpected death of his son, far from home. But apart from its profound interest to the father, the death of this young man, and the brightness that illuminated it, carry lessons of universal application, as Dr. Brown shows well, and convey unspeakable comfort to all who, while their children are about them, try to train them up in the way that they should go.

The story is that of a boy who in infancy inspires unusual interest by the early outbuddings of his intel-

lect, and then goes on, stage by stage, through school, academy, and university, acquiring fresh laurels at each, and inspiring respect alike by the extent of his knowledge, and the vigour and soundness of his intellect. Dr. Brown is very particular in recording the care taken, in his early training, to impress him with divine truth, and induce him to decide for Christ. It was long before these efforts bore the desired fruit, but in the end there was abundant evidence that they had not been in vain.

Undoubtedly his training was on Puritan lines, but there are various kinds of Puritanism—Puritanism, as some one has said, with the chill on, and Puritanism with the chill off. In the present case it was Puritanism with the chill off; Puritanism warmed by intense affection, and inspiring its objects with a corresponding love for their Puritan teachers and guides. So far from the channel in which the Puritanism ran creating a prejudice against it, it operated strongly in its favour. The love of Alexander Brown for his family, and his mother in particular, was singularly warm.

The strong literary taste alike for the old classics and for English writers which young Brown had shown before he left the University of Glasgow, continued to mark him at Oxford (where he had gained a scholarship at Queen's), so that besides excelling in what were pre-eminently the studies of the university, he gained the reputation of one of the best English scholars of his day. In his especial love for the English poets, he shared his father's taste, as he shared also the musical talent of both father and mother; while his uncle, William Dyce, appears to have developed

in him a love of art, and drawn his special attention to Ruskin and to Pre-Raphaelitism. His career at Oxford was as brilliant as at Glasgow, and the number of eminent Oxford men who bore testimony to his gifts, his acquirements, and his character, was very remarkable.

One of his earliest essays, written at the age of eighteen for the university of Glasgow Missionary Society was on religious poetry, in which he delineates one by one the leading features of each poet, from Spenser downwards; coming down to the English hymns of Watts, Newton, and Cowper; glancing also at the Latin mediæval poetry of the schools of St. Victor and Clugny. His essay stopped abruptly before he had ended his subject, but later he showed his special appreciation of Wordsworth, the two Brownings, and Keble. In this we mark an interesting development. In infancy the poems of Jane Taylor were his favourites; then Watts, Wesley, and Newton; with the advance of intellect and feeling, a higher order claimed his interest; but when he came to shake hands with death, and found that he had to face the solemn reckoning with his Judge, it was the hymns that were fullest of Christian truth that he found most precious, and especially those that were fullest of Christ. It was a happy circumstance that from his infancy he had become well acquainted with his Bible and also with Christian hymns; both were a great comfort in his dying days; the hymns as embodying, in a special form, some of the great truths which are the glory of the Bible.

Blameless in moral conduct, full of affection for his

parents and his family, and never surrendering his faith, he nevertheless disappointed them by apparent want of decision and heartiness in religious profession. When the question came to be what was to be his avocation in life, the choice seemed at first to lie between the bar and the church. For the bar he would have required more ample means than he could command; to the Scottish ministry he was so far well disposed, but he felt himself so deficient in those popular gifts on which success must depend in his father's church, the only one to which he felt drawn, that with all his love and respect for the ministry, he could not think of it as his profession. It had been the cherished desire of his father, and particularly of his mother, that he should be a minister of the Gospel; but at last both were obliged to surrender their wishes, and accede to what latterly attracted his interest—the Civil Service of India. Though he had but three months for preparation, and was among the youngest of the seventy candidates, he came in fourteenth, and set sail for India on 4th December 1858. His father's duties obliging him to remain at home, he was accompanied to the ship by his mother, one of whose last exhortations to him was, 'O Alexander, confess Christ.'

Arriving in Calcutta in the beginning of 1859, he applied himself to the usual examinations in the Indian languages, and in a very short time passed with the highest honours. But symptoms of ill-health supervening, he was sent off on a voyage to the Andaman Islands, from which he returned worse rather than better. No improvement in health occurring, he was ordered home. After less than a year's residence in

India, he sailed for England, on board the *Marlborough*, on December 12, 1859. As the *Marlborough* was approaching Madras, the surgeon of the ship informed Alexander that he was suffering from an abscess on the liver, and that an operation was indispensable. The operation was performed at Madras, but though it relieved him of a pain which had been very excruciating, it left him suffering much from bed-sores, and by and by, diarrhœa set in. Gradually, but steadily, his strength wasted, till, on the morning of the 3rd January 1860, his life ended, and on the afternoon of the same day his body was committed to the sea.

On the 27th March following, the arrival of the *Marlborough* off Weymouth was telegraphed to Aberdeen, and immediately Dr. Brown set out to meet his son. Hardly had he left Aberdeen when a telegram reached his house: 'Ship *Marlborough*. Brown is dead; he died shortly after he left Calcutta.' This telegram was forwarded so as to meet him at Stirling. Returning in great distress to Aberdeen, Dr. Brown and his wife went immediately to London, in order to obtain details of his death, and, if possible, learn the state of mind in which he died.

For this last was their great anxiety. They had never heard from him any such explicit declaration of his trust in Christ as satisfied them, so that when they heard of his death, his parents felt an intense anxiety to learn something of his previous state of mind. But it seemed as if they were doomed to disappointment. Among his papers was found the beginning of a letter which seemed designed to open up all. But weakness constrained him to drop the pencil, and on such a sub-

ject he was not disposed to employ an amanuensis. Nothing seemed to remain for them but the blind hope of faith ; the refuge of simple trust, that as God is faithful, so He is sure in His own way to fulfil the desires of them that fear Him, and show that He has heard and answered their prayers.

But a brighter experience was in store for them. One of the passengers on board the ship was the Rev. Joseph Scudder, a member of a remarkable American family, where the father, himself a missionary, had dedicated his eight sons to the same work, on which all of those who grew up to maturity sooner or later entered. When informed that a young civilian was on board the ship, very ill, Mr. Scudder, though himself far from well, went to see him, and finding his visit acceptable, repeated it as often as he could. Brown was evidently dying ; and Mr. Scudder, dealing with him as such, pressed on him the necessity of making his peace with God. Brown told him that he was a minister's son, but that since he came to India he had 'gone intellectually astray, and had sometime argued, for argument's sake, against the truth of the plan of salvation. But with what wonderful reality it comes back to me,' he added, 'in my present situation!' From this time he could hardly bear to be separated from Mr. Scudder. When asked whether it was only of late that he had begun to seek an interest in Christ, 'No,' he replied ; 'I have for some time past endeavoured to turn my attention to my soul's interests, but so many doubts and fears arose that it was not until after my acquaintance with you that I could hope my sins were forgiven.'

On the 2nd January 1860, as Mr. Scudder entered his cabin, he said, 'I am dying, and I wish to bid you good-bye.' 'I sat down by his side. He raised himself slightly, threw his arms around my neck, drew me close to him and kissed me, saying, "Oh, I bless God, I bless God, that He sent you on board this ship." The rest of their intercourse was of the most delightful kind ; the twenty-third Psalm and the fourteenth chapter of St. John were read ; his trust in Christ was unclouded. Early next morning he died.'

Words could not express the joy with which his parents learnt all this. To find how their prayers had been answered, their fears set at rest, and their hopes fulfilled ; how the Good Shepherd had cared for their boy in his hour of need, and what an abundant entrance had been ministered to him into the everlasting Kingdom, was an Elysian experience, bright and blessed beyond expression. It could not neutralise all their regrets for the removal of one whom they loved so well and from whom they hoped so much ; but it filled them with a new joy of inexpressible sweetness.

When Alexander Brown told Mr. Scudder that in India he had gone intellectually astray, he at first supposed him to mean that he had given up his faith. This, however, as he himself told him, was not the case. What really he meant, Mr. Scudder did not quite take up, but his father's impression was, that his literary tastes, and the writings of some of his favourite authors, had overlaid his spiritual impressions, especially when he came to India.

'His liking for the writings of Maurice, Kingsley, and Robertson was such, that though he had never embraced

as theological tenets their peculiar views of Christian truth, it had a tendency to dim in his mind the glory of that provision for the guilty which the Gospel reveals. To those who only want to have their religious sense quickened, to have the religious principle within them invigorated and directed, the writings of such men are highly attractive, especially if they are persons of cultivated taste and refined feeling. In such books they find enough of evangelical and spiritual Christianity to satisfy their wants. But when the conscience is once thoroughly awakened, and the guilt of sin pungently felt, in the near view of the judgment seat of Christ, such representations as those writers give of the work of Christ appear all unsatisfactory. When one hears that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and finds an echo to this in the condemnatory voice of his own guilty conscience, his only effectual relief is in the assurance that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin; that Christ suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God; that His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and that when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. As to Alexander, familiar as he was from early boyhood with the theory of the Atonement, but finding, in the religious writers whom he liked best, insinuations at least against the substitution of the innocent in the room of the guilty, as introducing a fictitious or unreal element into religion, he had very likely allowed himself to argue *in that direction* "for argument's sake, as he said, against the truth of the plan of salvation." To what else could he have referred when he added (as Mr. Scudder says in his letter), "But with what reality it comes back to one in my present situation?" In this view of his state of mind, well did his friend entreat him to take Christ simply at His

word : " Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." "

Among the remarkable grounds for thankfulness for his son's meeting with Mr. Scudder, Dr. Brown laid considerable stress on their common interest in literature, and, as it turned out, their common liking for Shakespeare. In one of their interviews, after much reading of Scripture and a long conversation on spiritual subjects, Brown asked his friend whether he would have any objection to read a little from some other book, suggesting Shakespeare ; handing him a small copy that lay among his books, and asking him to select a passage. Mr. Scudder turned to the second part of Henry iv., and read the passage which describes the feelings of one who has to bear tidings to a father of the death of his son :—

' Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news
Hath but a losing office ; and his tongue
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell,
Remember'd knolling a departing friend.'

' Who'll be the unwelcome messenger to tell *my* father that his son is dead ? ' Mr. Scudder merely expressed the hope that it would not be he.

' The reader will not fail to observe here the peculiar fitness of the instrument provided for opening the heart and directing the views of the dying youth. That in the near view of another world, his deep reserve on spiritual things would more or less have given way in conversing with almost any minister of Christ, is probable enough. But when, in addition to a winning gentleness and straightforward fidelity in his Master's service, this man of God was found to be of scholarly attainments, and in English

literature of congenial tastes, we wonder not that his respect for him and confidence in him quickly ripened into a love which on both sides grew from day to day, till at their last parting it melted into tears, and the dying one blessed God that such a friend had come on board. . . .’

Referring to the ‘spring of soul elevation, on the wings of our richest hymnology and choral song, which even at his meals and amidst his fretting sores, acted with the expulsive power of a new and nobler affection,’ Dr. Brown traces in a very interesting way the genealogy of the experience that had such a triumphant ending.

‘Who that has read the preceding chapters can fail to see the germs of all this springing up in the seclusion of his birthplace, only developed and extended during his Glasgow life; checked and deflected under new influences at Oxford; reviving somewhat when at home for the last time; insensibly acquiring strength and giving an earnest tone to his character amidst preparations for public life, and struggles with incipient disease in India; and finally, as he saw the curtain dropping, first upon his Indian plans, and next upon life itself, and eternity opening before him—becoming the solid foundation and the ready materials of that life divine, which God, in infinite love, had breathed into him, never to die? One cannot fail indeed to be struck with the beautiful *unity* of such a life, and, considering its brevity, the completeness which its crowning steps imparted to it. It is this, in fact, which to my own mind yields the deepest repose, when the surges of hallowed sorrow threaten to degenerate into corroding fretfulness, that He who has a right to do what He will with His own, had completed His own mysterious plan, turning gathered treasures,

never meant for use here, into the materials of a heavenly life with Himself above.'

With three characteristic reflections, Dr. Brown concludes his narrative. First, he calls the attention of Christian parents, mothers especially, to the great importance of interweaving Christian ideas and feelings with the earliest thinking of their children, and continuing in suitable ways, as they get older, to nourish their early impressions, because, though at first the desired result may not be achieved, salutary habits of reverence for divine things will be formed, and at some crisis of life the decisive step may be taken. Next, he calls on intelligent and inquiring young men who believe in the Word of God, to observe that what was wanting to Alexander Brown, and felt by him to be wanting when he came to die, was not knowledge of divine truth, not knowledge of the way of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ, but the *appropriation* of that sacrifice by himself, the accepting of Christ and giving himself over to Him, as his real and only Saviour. And it was this act of appropriation that made all the difference on his deathbed, and gave rise to that serene peace and joy with which he could contemplate the end.

And lastly there is a word for missionaries.

'One cannot wonder at the affectionate interest with which that dear, enfeebled missionary threw himself at once into the case of this dying youth, and waited on him day by day to the last. I can very well understand what I have been told, of the more than ordinary interest shown by almost every one on a long voyage to a sick and dying fellow-passenger. But that one so feeble, and

whose own complaint rendered him peculiarly susceptible of sickness, should spend so much of every day inhaling the diseased atmosphere of that small cabin, while the ship, too, was crossing the Line, and this in spite of remonstrances from the ship's surgeon, was surely something far beyond any ordinary sympathy. . . . Theirs was no ordinary parting. It was the parting of a son in the Gospel from one to whom he felt as to a spiritual father. Short had been their acquaintance, but what a tie had been formed between them ! With what rapidity had the soul of this youth, rich already in the knowledge of Scripture, opened to the personal apprehension, appropriation, and enjoyment of it all, under the gentle but energetic and unwearied instrumentality of his new-found friend ! . . . Who would have blamed that delicate man if he had yielded to the counsel given him, and spared himself, instead of watching by that couch from day to day, directing and ministering to the anxious spirit ? But like his Master, "he pleased not himself," and while others wondered at his assiduity, he had "meat to eat that they knew not of." . . .

'And O ye Christian mothers, who have sons in India, or going to it, or coming from it, for whose souls you pray from day to day, it may be with strong crying and tears, but as yet to no effect known to you ; never forget the missionaries of Christ whose field of labour is in that distant land. How many officers and civilians have to bless God that ever they met with such there ; how many have, through them, found Christ on the way out, or the way home ; and who knows but in some way as majestic as that which brought Joseph Scudder on board the *Marlborough* at the very time his ministrations were most needed and valued, the instrument which is to be blessed to your sons may be divinely brought to them ?'

CHAPTER XII

CHURCH MOVEMENTS

THERE was no church question in his own communion, and indeed very few out of it, in which Dr. Brown did not take a lively interest. The proposal for union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian, which at the time proved a failure, but which has been revived quite recently, under much more hopeful conditions, had a special interest for him whose grandfather had been a seceder of the best type, and whose mother had become one out of ardent thirst for the Gospel. On the lawfulness and desirableness of this union he seems never to have had either doubt or misgiving. His breadth of mind kept him from being in any degree influenced by the extreme views of those who demanded that, before any union should take place, the United Presbyterians should adopt every jot and tittle of the Free Church position. Nor had he much more regard for the scruples of those who maintained that to unite with men who deemed civil establishments of religion unlawful, would be to compromise our testimony in favour of national religion. He was naturally familiar with the history of the Secession, and he could not but see the false principles which some of the early

seceders had accepted on the subject of church union, when such a question as the lawfulness of a burghess oath was allowed to split them up into two denominations—burghers and anti-burghers. Like his friend Dr. Duncan, he would have ‘a large creed for himself, and a small creed for other people.’ Individually, he desired for himself a creed embracing as wide a field of truth as possible, and not one atom of revealed truth, great or small, could he ever allow himself to disavow. But his demands were much smaller, if the question was whether he ought to hold Christian fellowship with this one, or with that. If he was satisfied that the man believed in Christ, he would not withdraw from his fellowship, however much he might be in error. Churches required to have a more extended basis of union, but it was out of the question that before they united, every truth, however subordinate, held by the one, should be accepted by the other. He believed that there was quite sufficient agreement between the two churches to justify and even require an incorporating union; but he was not greatly disappointed that the negotiations failed, because the Free Church in the Highlands did not seem ripe for it.

The great objection to the proposed union was, that it would imply a desertion of Free Church principles. How did Dr. Brown meet this? We quote from a printed speech delivered at Inverness during the Union negotiations.

‘And what, pray, is this matter on which it is alleged we differ so widely that to unite in spite of it is to betray our principles? I have been familiar with

it from my boyhood in all its phases; but it is now narrowed up to the one point of civil endowments of religion. In the heat of that bitter Voluntary Controversy which raged so many years between us, we both fell into the too common error of imputing to each other, not that which each only *professed* to hold, but what *we inferred* that their views led to. No matter though each of us said to the other, We don't hold that; we never did hold it, perhaps we even abhorred it; this went for nothing. We said to one another, You either did hold it, or you should have held it in order to be consistent; and so we set one another down as committed to errors which each for themselves refused to own, and we gave names to each other accordingly, not always the most savoury. This was done on both sides; but the Disruption was the beginning of a great and blessed change. . . .

‘Now, what is the precise point of difference between us and you? (the United Presbyterians). You think the civil establishment of the Church of Christ an unscriptural way of providing for the temporal support of the clergy, and that in the long run it always proves injurious to the church. The Free Church declines to accept that proposition, holding that there are cases in which this is both lawful and expedient. But in doing so they make some important reservations. The first reservation is, that the civil establishment must not be such as to interfere with the internal government of the church. How many civil establishments of religion does this cut off? Nearly every existing one in all Christendom. The most determined stickler in the Free Church for an Established Church admits

that nearly all church establishments are tainted with the poison of Erastianism, and the one church establishment on which they fall back as having been rightly constituted and to some extent actually realised, is that of Scotland. But they admit that for ages it had had to resist the encroachments of the state upon the church's province, and that now at least, the right of the state to interfere in cases which they think involve the Erastian element has been formally established by law; for it was on that ground that they came out from it. Thus, then, the theory of a rightly constituted religious establishment has been successfully pierced through, and such an establishment no longer exists for the Free Church. It is a pure theory.'

This speech was delivered before the abolition of patronage in the Established Church took place, and it is interesting to mark the catholic and generous spirit in which he alluded to that event, which he believed was coming. The Established Church, he thought, had good reason to seek the abolition of a yoke which it felt to be most burdensome, and after household suffrage had been given to the country, and given by the Tories, it was impossible that a church could continue to be popular which excluded the people from all active share in its management.

'If ever the day comes when in the Scottish Establishment patronage shall be entirely swept away, I for one will rejoice in it, persuaded that the Established Church will soon feel the benefit of it, and all within its pale be the better for the change. To myself, I say, this event would give real satisfaction — more satisfaction, perhaps, than to some of our Free Church

minority, whose whole ecclesiastical sympathies seem to be concentrated in the Free Church. But he who sees in the mere abolition of patronage any symptom of an approaching reunion with the Free Church, sees with different eyes from mine. To some it may indicate something more like the converse of this—a gradual approach of the Established Church itself towards a popular system of *support* as well as a popular system of *election*; in other words, the union of the whole Presbyterians of Scotland in one Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. That is a little more like “comprehensive Presbyterian union” than what has been advocated under that delightful name by an esteemed friend of mine not a thousand miles away from me just now’ (Rev. Donald Fraser).

A point which he made clear in this speech, and on which many worthy persons need enlightenment now, was, that in uniting with the United Presbyterians no one was called to abandon any principle which as a Free Churchman he held. In recently uniting with the Free Church, the Original Seceders had not been called to abandon their view of the descending obligation of the Covenants, but were as free to maintain it and proclaim it as ever. So the most ardent upholder of the principle of an Established Church would be as free to hold it, and to call on all the world to hold it, after union as before. At the Westminster Assembly, Pre-millennialists and Anti-pre-millennialists had agreed to make the time of the second Advent an open question, but they had not bound themselves to refrain from advocating their own views upon it. In the Colonies, within six years no fewer than seven presbyterian

unions had been effected, all of them letting the question of civil establishments alone. The Victoria union in 1859; that of New South Wales in 1865; Nova Scotia in 1860; Canada in 1861; New Zealand in 1862; Queensland in 1863; South Australia in 1865. Had Dr. Brown had occasion to refer to these unions later, he would have said that in addition to the union between the representatives of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches in Canada in 1861, the body representing the Established Church of Scotland had at a later date united with the other two; and he might have added that never had the beneficial fruits of union been better manifested than in the 'Comprehensive Presbyterian union' of the whole Dominion. Not only had they worked harmoniously, but they had been roused to a much higher measure of zeal, and to much grander efforts of Christian enterprise; had shown a profounder interest in foreign missions, and at home had addressed themselves with heart and hope to a gigantic undertaking that would have staggered the fragments of the church previous to union; had surveyed the almost boundless limits of the vast North Western Territories which had lately become parts of the Dominion, and roused their utmost energies to supply them with the means of grace; so that, whatever other churches might do, even a Klondyke would not start on its wild and perilous career without a staff of Presbyterian ministers and missionaries to warn people of their perils, and call on them to remember the God of their fathers. It is truly instructive how good an example our colonial daughters have set to the mother churches in Scotland. Dr. Brown concluded

his speech by reminding his audience that in every case that had occurred, Presbyterian union had worked for good.

When the question arose in the Free Church whether hymns of human composition should be allowed in its worship, no one could have doubted on which side Dr. Brown would be found. Not but that his appreciation of the psalms was as warm as any man's; not but that the marvellous fellowship with God, of which the psalms are the expression,—so near, so intimate, and withal so reverent—filled him habitually with wonder and delight; but because the advent of Christ, the new aspect which that event gave to Christian worship, and the need it created for songs in which the name and the work of Christ should be on the lips as well as in the heart of all worshippers, seemed to him not only to justify, but to demand the use of Christian hymns. His musical taste, and his familiarity with the history of the Christian Church, his knowledge of the place that hymns had held in it from the very first, and of the blessed influence they had exerted on Christian life, were additional indications of the part he would take in the discussion of the question. It may seem strange to some that in the Free Church of Scotland there should have been any room for discussion on such a subject; but the more conservative ministers and members held strongly that the psalms, being divinely inspired, formed the sole materials which it was lawful to use in public praise, and that hymns of human composition, or human hymns as they were called, were of the nature of will-worship,

and ought to be rejected along with all other human devices in the worship of God. Dr. Brown's position was, that while the psalms should ever have the first place in public worship, and could not be passed over with impunity, hymns were a valuable adjunct, especially those which extolled the Redeemer, and made use of His incarnation, death, resurrection, and future coming, to exalt the spirit of love, trust, and obedience. Naturally he was named a member of the committee which the General Assembly appointed to consider and report on the subject; and when the committee's duty was arranged under several heads, he was appointed convener of a sub-committee 'to inquire into the rule and practice of the Early Church, so far as it can be ascertained.' The result was the preparation by him of an elaborate report, in which, beginning with Pliny's letter to the Emperor Trajan, in which it is said that the Christians were accustomed to meet on a set day and sing a hymn to Christ as God, he goes through notices in Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Celsus, Origen, Lucian, Nepos, Eusebius, and many others, bringing out very clearly the fact that hymns of human composition were in common use in the earliest ages. He pursues his investigation with characteristic care and thoroughness, not, however, ascribing to the patristic writers more than the authority of witnesses, whose service consisted in their bringing out the actual state of the fact. As a sample of his acquaintance with other than the outstanding writers, as well as of his candour in appreciating some from whom he differed in other matters, his reference to Nepos is worthy of attention.

‘NEPOS, an Egyptian bishop, somewhere about A.D. 241-244, and his opponent, DIONYSIUS, Bishop of Alexandria from A.D. 231 to 264 or 265. Nepos was a Millennarian, and both his *Confutation of the Allegorists* (now lost), and his warm zeal, created a large party of adherents to his views, who after his decease were zealous in maintaining and propagating them. Dionysius, when on a visit to that locality, having gathered the presbyters and teachers together, discussed the subject with them for three days, and commended their exceeding candour and the frankness with which at length they admitted themselves to have erred. For the memory of Nepos himself, Dionysius expresses great reverence, saying, “In many other respects I accord with, and greatly love Nepos, both for his faith and industry and great study in the Scriptures; also for his abundant psalmodic compositions, by which many of the heathen are still delighted.”’

Dr. Brown had not occasion in this paper to go beyond the writers of the Early Church, otherwise he would have been sure to advert to the mediæval hymns in Latin rhyme, of which the *Dies Iræ* is the most remarkable specimen; but such of them as were not vitiated by Romish corruptions, of which Archbishop Trench has given so excellent a collection, were much esteemed by him. The school of Adam of St. Victor showed well how remarkably adapted the Latin tongue was to devotional poetry, its rich sonorous sounds being equally fitted to express the majestic and the plaintive—the majesty of God and the misery of man. When Mr. Gladstone published his Latin version of ‘Rock of Ages,’ and other translations, Dr. Brown was greatly

interested, feeling distinctly that the Latin tongue added something to the effect of the hymns beyond what was involved in the English original; and he was very desirous that Mr. Gladstone should translate more hymns, and prominent among them all, as fitted to be supremely useful, Miss Charlotte Elliott's 'Just as I am.' On one occasion, being among some friends in London, he expressed this desire, and means were found of approaching Mr. Gladstone and making the request. Lord Kinnaird was the medium of communication, but Mr. Gladstone felt that he must for the present decline the invitation. His answer was as follows:—

‘HAWARDEN CASTLE,
‘CHESTER, November 1, 1873.

‘MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—I am gratified by your kind note and its enclosures, and if it depended on my will only to accede to your wish and that of your correspondent, I would not hesitate for a moment, for I could find time during walks and other odds and ends of ways.

‘But I have grown very rusty, and doubt whether there remains in me the moderate classical skill necessary for the purpose. I should not like to send a merely mechanical translation. The best plan will be that I should turn over the matter in my mind, and if I find I can make any way, I shall gladly do it.—Ever sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.’

It does not, however, appear that Mr. Gladstone was ever able to fulfil his half purpose.¹

¹ Will it be counted great presumption if the present writer, to whom the translation of our best hymns into Latin rhyme has been

Sometimes Dr. Brown tried, with more or less success, to break down the prejudice of very conservative congregations against hymns. Once when supplying the pulpit of a friend on the Firth of Clyde, he carried his point by a kind of ruse, giving out the fourth of the hymns which are usually printed in Scottish Bibles after the paraphrases, and pressing on

for some time a pleasant and profitable recreation, submits the following?—

- 1 *Omnino qualis sum, et solum
Orans pro me fusum cruorem,
Tuamque invitationem,
Agne Dei, venio.*
- 2 *Omnino qualis sum, non morans,
Nec labes luere laborans,
Luentem tuam gratiam orans,
Agne Dei, venio.*
- 3 *Omnino qualis sum, oppressus,
In dubitatione mersus,
Tum præliis, tum timore pressus,
Agne Dei, venio.*
- 4 *Omnino qualis sum, pollutus,
Pauper, miser, cæcus, nudus,
Cunctis egens donis tuis,
Agne Dei, venio.*
- 5 *Omnino qualis sum, me enim
Accipies, et sanabis mentem,
Quod tuo verbo pono fidem,
Agne Dei, venio.*
- 6 *Omnino qualis sum, amorem
Laudans per omnia victorem ;
Me tibi dicans servitorem,
Agne Dei, venio.*
- 7 *Omnino qualis sum, fructurus
Modis quam maximis amoris,
Tecum in cœlis mox futurus,
Agne Dei, venio.—W. G. B.*

the people that in the Free Church Hymn Book there were nearly 'four hundred as good as they.' In this way he enabled the minister of the congregation to fulfil his desire to make use of the hymns. On another occasion, when in the island of Skye, he invited the people to meet him on a week evening, that he might teach them how to sing. By his own example he showed them the difference between lively singing and the slow drawl to which they were accustomed, and getting his daughters to sing with him a hymn in parts, he appealed to themselves whether they did not enjoy it, and they confessed that it was beautiful.

With his friend, Sir William Mackinnon, he had oftener than once some friendly discussion on hymns. Once when at dinner at Balinakill along with some shooting friends, he asked him, 'Mr. Mackinnon, would anybody make me believe, if I did not know before, that for three hundred years, until lately, the ministers of the Church of Scotland could utter the name of Jesus as often as they liked in their prayers and in their preaching, but never once in their *praises*?' 'But it's all in the psalms,' was the reply. 'Yes, under a veil; but the veil has been removed, and you worship with the veil down, and only try to look through to Christ. Besides, it is not everybody that can see through it as well as you. We like to get the Gospel in our mouth, and say, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear."' But Sir William could not take it in. It is well known that, scandalised by such 'defections' of the Free Church, Sir William cancelled a clause in his will leaving to the church a large sum of money. But, as Dr. Brown,

with his usual charity, said, 'He has gone, dear man, where there is no veil of any kind.'

A much more serious question arose in the Free Church when it was proposed, within the last ten years, to deal with the Westminster Confession of Faith, so as to obviate the difficulties of many, and their reluctance to subscribe to it. On this question Principal Brown took a very bold part, in a speech delivered in the General Assembly, where he moved for a committee to consider the subject. Not that he proposed any alteration in the substance of the Confession, for that would be putting a new patch on an old garment; and besides, under the model trust-deed, their property was so connected with their standards, that if they altered the one they might imperil the other. There could be no doubt that churches had a perfect right to revise their standards from time to time; that was admitted on the other side; but whenever they made a proposal to change them in any way, their opponents were full of objections. They reminded him of the man who said, 'I am perfectly open to conviction, but I should like to see the man who would convince me.'

The way in which the Principal showed his courage was by pointing out faults in the Confession. They need not wonder if the framers of it, noble, learned, and able men though they were, had committed blunders. The Duke of Wellington on one occasion, on being asked whom he considered the greatest general, replied, 'The man who made the fewest mistakes.' And the framers of the Confession had made two great mistakes. The first was, they had

put more into the Confession than they ought to have put into a document intended to test the fitness of men for office in the church. They had dogmatised on the salvation of 'elect infants,' as if there were infants elect and non-elect—surely a matter that should never have been put into a Confession. And in regard to the civil magistrate, they had given him charge of the first as well as the second table of the Decalogue, which no one now believed. Twenty years ago, when there had been a discussion in his Presbytery about the formula, and he had pointed out this erroneous dogma about the civil magistrate, he had been asked, 'Why, then, did you sign it?' His answer was that he had signed it on the principle of what Mr. Gladstone said of his Home Rule Bill, 'It is dead.' His second objection was that they had reversed the order in which divine truth was conveyed in the Scriptures. They had laid down a doctrine of predestination and preterition before any mention was made of the creation of man or his fall. The scriptural order observed in other Confessions was, first to dwell on the creation of man, the fall and the consequences of the fall, and then the mysterious provision made for the salvation of man. Everybody could understand that, and would receive it, he thought, readily.

His bold utterances startled the Assembly, and the seconder of his motion, the Rev. Dr. Adam, felt called to separate the motion itself from the speech advocating it. He did not agree with Principal Brown's remark on the property of the church; he believed they were as free in that as in other respects; but even if the civil courts should decide against them, they must follow the convictions of their consciences.

He hinted that at the advanced age of their venerable father (he was then in his eighty-sixth year), his words were somewhat less carefully chosen than they might have been, though the mental acuteness and power that had been manifested by him on this as on other occasions were truly remarkable.

No fewer than seven motions in all were submitted to the Assembly, showing that even those who were of opinion that some step should be taken, whether in the direction of revisal or otherwise, were at sea as to the form which the matter should take. At last a little change was made on the terms of Dr. Brown's motion, and on being put to the vote, it was carried against another motion, absolutely refusing to entertain the question, by 413 votes to 130. After the subject had been considered by a committee, the form of a Declaratory Act was agreed on and passed by a future Assembly. In this Principal Brown cordially acquiesced. This enactment led to a small secession—headed by two ministers and a few students, and followed by a small body of people, chiefly in Highland parishes—the first secession that had occurred in the Free Church. The Declaratory Act was exceedingly moderate in its tone; and in many of the instances where it led to separation, it is believed that its provisions were misunderstood. Dr. Brown was vexed on account of the turmoil which the Act occasioned in some parts of the Highlands, and, about a year before his death, contributed a paper regarding it to the *Northern Evangelist*—a paper circulating chiefly in the Highlands. His points were mainly these: that many who were opposed to the Act did not know what it was; and that if they had known, they would never have objected to it.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ROBERTSON SMITH CASE

It was in the year 1877 that the Robertson Smith case began to engross the attention of the Free Church. Though at first, as a member of the College Committee, averse to any prosecution, Dr. Brown felt it to be his duty ultimately to take side against Professor Smith. He took this course at a great sacrifice of personal feeling, and very much against the natural bent of his inclination. The young professor was the son of a highly respected country minister, and he himself had been a country minister; it was a pain to cause his brother distress, as it would have been a great pleasure to be able to gratify him. William Robertson Smith, along with a brother who died early, had had a course of honour in the University of Aberdeen, rarely, if ever, paralleled; his scholarship was quite phenomenal; and the University and the community were proud of him. He had not studied theology at Aberdeen, but the reputation he had gained at Edinburgh, both in New College and in the University, had created unbounded expectations of his future career. The General Assembly of 1870 had made him Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis at Aberdeen within a few weeks of his completing the usual term

of study for the ministry—a case of rapid promotion unparalleled in the history of the Free Church. Personally, Dr. Brown not only shared with his brethren their high estimate and expectation of Mr. Smith, but he liked the man, and was so delighted with his inaugural lecture as to distribute it among his friends. In a college where there were but four professors, any disagreement could not fail to be peculiarly painful, especially when it affected vitally the standing of one of the four.

Moreover, Dr. Brown was himself disposed to freedom and progress wherever vital interests were not concerned. He used to say to his friends that in his youth he had made it his prayer that God would give him a mind candid and fresh, and open to truth from whatever quarter it might come; and he believed that God had answered that prayer. He had favoured union with the United Presbyterian Church when many condemned it as involving abandonment of Free Church principle; he had actively promoted the Evangelical Alliance, which also, with its simple creed, some thought unworthy of the confidence of men who held by the Westminster Confession. He had always been, as he continued to be, a supporter of liberal measures in the church when the more conservative members had been on the other side. In politics he was a cordial Liberal to the end. A scholar himself, he had always had sympathy with scholars. He had cultivated friendly personal relations with men from whose theology he differed widely, when he thought that they held any common ground that might tend to a closer alliance. He was well aware that German scholarship, even under

rationalists, had been in some respects of great service to the Bible, notwithstanding the deadly influence of its rationalism, and he fully believed that continued research would still be useful, while he dreaded with the utmost sensitiveness any injury to the Scriptures themselves, as well as to the sacred deposit which they contained. He even shared with Bengel the opinion that in the legitimate prosecution of Biblical criticism, devout people might have their feelings greatly distressed; but that as facts were facts, their legitimate effect ought to be allowed, however much they might conflict with their long-cherished prepossessions. He knew that there were many questions yet unsolved connected with the origin of the books of the Old Testament and likewise of the New, in regard to which it was the duty of all lovers of the Bible to keep their minds open, and hope for further light. Although the Old Testament had not been specifically his field of critical inquiry, he was not indisposed to the mental exertion needed for placing him abreast of the questions that Mr. Smith had raised. All these considerations would have led him to concede to Mr. Smith the liberty which he and his friends claimed, the more especially that he knew him to be a true Calvinist and an evangelical believer, whose object was to uphold supernatural revelation, and draw men to believe on Jesus Christ.

What placed him, therefore, in the ranks of opposition could only have been a firm conviction that the theory which Mr. Smith favoured had not only no sufficient ground in fact, but that it was fitted to shake faith in the authority of the Bible, and to promote the cause of unbelief. As the case went on, his

position became very painful. Local feeling had risen to a high pitch, and on both sides many bitter things were said. It is not for the present writer to try to adjust the balance of blame between the two parties, or to decide whether greater injustice was done to the Smith party by those who accused them of the worst faults of rationalism, or to their opponents by those who denounced them as ignorant, bigoted, and intolerant. All that concerns a biographer of Dr. Brown is to point out that by many he was counted a persecutor, an enemy of light, a man who would bind his church to indefensible positions, in spite of all the evidence that was arising to show that they were untenable.¹ The strife was all the more bitter from its involving the position of a young professor, dear to his students, who was held in the highest honour by the community, and especially by the whole Free Church, until the

¹ A sample of the kind of feeling directed against Principal Brown and his friends, all the worse that years had elapsed before it was published, is to be found in Miss Anna M. Stoddart's *Life of Professor John Stuart Blackie*. As an admirer of scholarship, Professor Blackie strongly supported Professor Robertson Smith; but it is impossible to conceive that he would have had any sympathy with the following presumptuous and ignorant tirade:—'The Free Church Assembly was busy with dubious work, beginning its prosecution of Dr. Robertson Smith, and he (Professor Blackie) had to trust to correspondents for a full account of the pitiful scene. That the eventual result of stupidity, cowardice, shuffling, and rancour should prove to be increase of honour to Dr. Robertson Smith, and of enlightenment to all students of the Bible, was not apparent then, and men could hardly look forward to a time when the paltry persecutors of that day would accept, without a twinge of remorse, the larger knowledge of their victim, and attitudinise as progressives' (*Life*, vol. ii. pp. 151-52). The epithets which are here implicitly applied to Dr. Brown are seen to be as absurd as they are false when he is accused of 'stupidity, cowardice, shuffling, and rancour.'

recent questions began to be raised. When Dr. Brown became one of the most outstanding opponents of Professor Smith in Aberdeen, the force of this feeling, when directed against him, was all but overwhelming; so that not all the mildness of his character, the habitual serenity of his temper, and the admitted blamelessness and conscientiousness of his past life could protect him from the storm.

The case came first before the College Committee of the Free Church, of which the late Rev. Dr. Laughton of Greenock, a most scholarly man, a devout, lovable, Christian gentleman, was then convener. Several representations had been made to the Committee that the articles 'Angels' and 'Bible,' contributed by Mr. Smith to the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, contained statements inconsistent with the views maintained by the Free Church, and ought to be inquired into. As the chief charge bore on the Pentateuch, and especially the Book of Deuteronomy, it may be well to give the statement of Professor Smith's views thereon, summarised by the College Subcommittee on the case, and admitted by him to be substantially correct.

'1. That various portions of the Levitical institutions, to which a Mosaic authorship is assigned in the Pentateuch, are of later date, having come into the form in which they are exhibited only by degrees, and in days long subsequent to the age of Moses. This is held to be established by discrepancies between the different parts of Scripture, which are held to arise when the Mosaic authorship is assigned.

'2. In particular the Book of Deuteronomy, in portions

of it which *ex facie* bear to be the record of utterances of Moses, makes reference to institutions and arrangements much later than his time.

‘3. This is to be accounted for by assuming that some prophetic person, in later times, threw into this form a series of oracles, embracing at once Mosaic revelations and modifications or adaptations which were of later development; all together being thrown into the form of a declaration and testimony by Moses.

‘4. That viewed especially with reference to the literary habits and conceptions of that time and people, the method thus employed was legitimate, and was such as the Divine Spirit might sanction and employ. It was intended to teach that the whole body of laws delivered were the fruit of the same seed, had received the same sanction, and were alike inspired by the Spirit which spake by Moses.

‘5. The sub-committee do not understand the Professor to mean that this involved any fraud upon those to whom the book was delivered. It was given and taken for what it was—however it may subsequently have been misunderstood, in the Professor’s view, in so far as it came to be believed to be an ordinary historical record of actual Mosaic utterances.’

Those by whom the consideration of the subject was pressed on the College Committee, complained of this view that it made Deuteronomy ascribe to Moses what Moses neither said nor did, and that this manifestly implied that the book was not divinely inspired. On considering the case, the College Committee found that, under the terms of its appointment by the General Assembly, its duty in such a case was limited to a single point—to consider whether the views expressed

were such as to call for a prosecution of the author for heresy. Such prosecution could be justified only if the views were contrary to the Confession of Faith, the doctrinal standard of the church. In the event of the Committee finding that there was material for a 'libel,'—the technical expression for the document that presents the alleged heresy in due form,—the case would fall to be taken up by the Presbytery of which Mr. Smith was a member—the Presbytery of Aberdeen. The College Committee, after carefully considering the subject and conferring with Mr. Smith, came to the conclusion that the articles complained of did not contain materials for a libel, and reported accordingly to the General Assembly. They did not accept of his theory, but they did not see that as held by him it was contrary to the Confession. In coming to this conclusion, they were greatly influenced by the fact that Mr. Smith strongly declared himself a believer in the divine authority and inspiration of Scripture, and maintained that his theory of the origin of Deuteronomy did not conflict with that belief. Mr. Smith therefore could not be prosecuted for denying the inspiration of the book, although to some it appeared that his views were logically inconsistent with that doctrine, and destructive in their tendency.

While the Committee found that there was no case for a libel, they at the same time had to call attention to certain features of the article, 'Bible,' of which they disapproved. The article professed to consider only the literary or human side of the origin of the various books, but said nothing of its divine side; it did not even state the view of the Bible taken by the church

as a whole; it contained no reference to the author's belief in its divine inspiration; and while it set forth critical positions of the destructive school maintained by their authors, it did not say decisively that Mr. Smith did not agree with their destructive inferences. On such grounds the Committee felt called to declare their conviction that the article, contrary to Mr. Smith's intention, was 'of a dangerous and unsettling tendency.' The College Committee were all but unanimous in presenting this report; the only member who protested against it, and maintained that there was ground for a charge of heresy, was Professor Smeaton. Principal Brown, who was a member of the Committee, dissented on the ground that the article, 'Angels,' contained very objectionable matter; but both he and Sir Henry Moncreiff, who afterwards sided with the opposition, concurred in the report, so far as the article 'Bible' was concerned.

When the Report came before the General Assembly, an endeavour was made to avoid discussion on the merits, and confine it to the technical or business aspect of the case. But it was found impossible to prevent the merits from being entered into. Dr. Moody Stuart went minutely into the whole subject, holding Mr. Smith's views to be full of deadly error. On the other side, strong emphasis was laid on Professor Smith's own decided belief in the inspiration of the Bible, and some of the speakers, even of pronounced spiritual character, so far from desiring that he should be censured, thought the church ought to be grateful that they had a believing scholar who was able to guide them on the difficult and important

questions that were now raised, and that could not be overlooked. But most of those who took that side did so on the ground that, whether the theory were true or false, full liberty should be given to Mr. Smith and others to investigate the subject and state their conclusions.

The Assembly decided by a large majority that the case should be sent to the Presbytery of Aberdeen for further consideration. Moved by the conviction that much misapprehension prevailed as to his real views, Mr. Smith, at the end of the discussion, announced that he had resolved to avail himself of a right which the laws of the church give to a man against whom a *fama* was in circulation—the right of demanding a ‘libel.’ On the first opportunity he would call on the Presbytery of Aberdeen to frame a libel, in order that it might be clearly seen what were the charges brought against him, and what reply he had to make to them.

In consequence of this, Principal Brown found his position somewhat changed. As there must be a libel, it would be necessary to consider not only whether the views of Mr. Smith were *expressly* opposed to the Confession of Faith, but also whether they were *constructively* opposed to it—whether, contrary to his own belief and avowal, they did not involve the denial of the inspiration of Deuteronomy. This at least seems to have been the view taken by Dr. Brown. As a member of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, he had to take part in drawing up the libel, specifying all the charges against Mr. Smith, although that did not necessarily imply that in the end he would hold all the

charges 'relevant.' To find a charge 'relevant' is to find that, *if proved*, it would involve censure. In charges of immorality the 'proof' is a separate matter from the relevancy. But in a charge of heresy, separate proof is not needed, because the matter dealt with is in the author's own writings. If it be found 'relevant,' or contrary to the standards, the case is finished. But whether at the beginning he intended it or not, Dr. Brown found himself drawn, under the endless discussions and complications of the case, into the position of an accuser. And under the influence of the excitement which prevailed, and the many provoking attacks made on him, he did his part with more keenness than might have been expected from his usually serene and friendly temper. There were endless difficulties in framing the libel. At last it came before the Assembly, with eight charges against Professor Smith, but of the eight, the one of outstanding importance was that which concerned Deuteronomy.

A long and keen discussion took place at the Glasgow Assembly of 1878. Principal Brown from the bar stated the case for the accusers, Professor Salmond for the defenders, Professor Smith for himself. Sir Henry Moncreiff moved in substance that the count on Deuteronomy be found 'relevant,' implying that Professor Smith had contravened the doctrine of the Confession on Inspiration. Principal Rainy, on the other hand, moved substantially that there was not ground for holding that Professor Smith had denied confessional doctrine. The motion of Sir Henry was carried by a small majority, and the case was sent back to the Presbytery of Aberdeen, to be brought to an end.

This decision of the Assembly was virtually a condemnation of Professor Smith.

Principal Brown, as representing the prosecutors, finding that this, the most important charge, had been decided in their favour, 'fell from the complaint,' as the technical phrase is, in respect of the other charges. that is to say, indicated his willingness to let them drop. In this the Assembly acquiesced.

It is unnecessary to go at large into the subsequent stages of this most painful case, which was thus thrown back on the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and virtually, in the main, on three members of the Senatus—Principal Brown, Professor Salmond, and Professor Smith. The keenness of feeling with which the matter was discussed underwent no abatement, and it must have been a miserable time for all concerned. The case came back to the General Assembly in 1879; and, by an unexpected change of fortune, Professor Smith, by a very small majority (302 to 299), after being admonished by the Moderator, was reinstated in his office. It was fondly hoped that after all he had passed through, and inasmuch as he had submitted himself to the admonition of the church, he would steer his course more carefully in the future, and that his extraordinary abilities, which were universally admitted and admired, and his undoubted attachment and loyalty to the Free Church, would make his future career one of honour and usefulness among those with whom he had been reared, and to whom his heart was most closely knit. After being admonished by the Moderator, Professor Smith said, 'Moderator, I hope that I am not out of place when I say that while I thank God for the issue

of this evening—an issue which I trust will be for His glory and for the maintenance of His truth—I have never been more sensible than on the present occasion of the blame that rests upon me for statements which have proved so incomplete that, even at the end of three years, the opinion of this House has been so divided upon them. I feel that, in the providence of God, this is a very weighty lesson to one placed, as I am, in the position of a teacher, and I hope that, by His grace, I shall not fail to learn by it.'

But scarcely had the Assembly closed, when another of his articles in the *Encyclopædia* appeared, written in the same tone, and characterised by the same features as the one which had given rise to so much animadversion. At the meeting of the Commission of Assembly in August it was moved and carried, in consequence of this, that he should not teach his classes during the next session; and at the following Assembly (1880) it was carried that he should no longer continue to hold the chair. His position as a minister of the church was not touched; and it was agreed that he should continue to receive the salary of his office; which, however, he declined to accept.

Had Professor Smith stated to the Assembly of 1879 that an article was on the eve of appearing, written probably (as the Assembly would understand) under the influence of the feelings caused by his expected dismissal from the service of the church, and had he indicated that in the future more attention would be given to those defects which had first been pointed out in the report of the College Committee, there might have been a very different result from that

which actually followed. As it was, a feeling of despair that he would ever come into line seemed to come on the church. It was feared that he would proceed on the old lines and in the old tone. All along, Professor Smith had shown a great lack of that spirit of consideration which his position called for. He had not seemed to realise the pain which his views, propagated with such confidence, had given to hearts innumerable, whose feelings he was bound to respect. Perhaps this attitude recommended itself under the influence of the feeling that he was bound to be firm, and to show the utmost confidence in his views; that he dare not seem to play with his convictions; and that a readiness to conciliate opponents might betray him into compromises hurtful to the cause of truth. If this was his impression, it showed, what other things likewise showed, that his judgment was as fallible as his scholarship was brilliant. A young man appointed by his church to an unexampled honour at the age of twenty-three, ought at thirty to have had more regard for the feelings of his fathers and brethren, and the innumerable company of devout people, who, when first they became acquainted with his views, felt that, if they were correct, the Bible could no longer be to them the book it had been. Principal Brown and others felt that he might have launched his views on the public in a much gentler spirit, and accompanied with such cordial testimonies to the inspiration of Holy Scripture as would have obviated the panic that arose, and secured for his views, if not acceptance, certainly a much more unprejudiced and calm consideration. He might have shown something of the

modesty becoming youth, when bringing forward views in direct opposition to the judgment of fathers who, by long and faithful service, had earned the esteem and confidence of the church. It seemed as if on all such points his judgment entirely misled him. He appeared at first to have had no expectation of the storm which he was destined to raise. Such errors are not uncommon among students who have spent their whole time in the seclusion of the study, and without even an average amount of intercourse with their fellows. Many men of moderate views were of opinion that Professor Smith had a message from God to the church, which he mangled by the manner in which he gave it forth; and that had he kept it within its proper bounds, and delivered it with due consideration, he might have remained among his brethren, where he wished to remain, to the end of his days.

Principal Brown continued to hold the same opinion on Professor Smith's views to the end. It has been supposed that he modified them, but the testimony of his most intimate friends and correspondents shows the contrary. No doubt in his correspondence he did say, that seeing the new views had so largely pervaded the church, he would not feel called to raise a public controversy if it were proposed to place some one holding them in a chair; but a change in what might be allowed as a matter of public polity was very different from a change of personal conviction. Perhaps, too, those who ascribed a change to him may have been misled by the warmth of feeling contained in a letter in which he apologised for his absence on the occasion of the presentation of the Professor's likeness, subscribed for

by his friends, to the Free Church College at Aberdeen. On that occasion he wrote as follows:—

‘ Dr. Robertson Smith is worthy of all the honour that can be paid to his memory for the unequalled brilliancy of his talents, and for the uncommon ease with which he was able to acquire and even to speak the most difficult languages. The one thing in which I was unable to go along with him was his treatment of the books of the Old Testament, against which I had to protest ; but all that is at an end now, and there I wish it for ever to remain.’

Such an expression of feeling was very creditable to his heart ; but it was no indication of a change of view. For neither when the theory was more fully developed, nor when its practical effects were studied, did Dr. Brown feel that it became more acceptable. The battle in the Robertson Smith case had been limited in the main to the case of Deuteronomy ; but a further draught on one’s faith was demanded when one was called to believe that the legislation of Leviticus belonged to a period subsequent to the return from the captivity in Babylon. And it has been the policy of the party to be for ever extending their line and multiplying opposition to traditional views. When Dr. Brown saw the length to which such a champion of the higher criticism as Professor Cheyne went, or even when he studied Dr. Driver’s minute allocations of the text to the several writers whose style he so ingeniously detected, he was not led to a more favourable view of the theory. Still less when its practical effects were considered. It had been urged in its favour, that by removing inconsistencies from

the Scripture narrative, it would promote faith; it would remove objections that had made faith in the inspiration and divine authority of Scripture difficult or impossible. As time went on, it was apparent to Dr. Brown that this result was not accomplished. On the contrary, it was clear that faith in the trustworthiness of Scripture had received a shake since the controversy began; that many persons were now boldly saying that the Old Testament was not to be relied on; and that even where faith in its divine origin had not been destroyed, there had arisen a certain indefinite spirit of distrust, a kind of uncertainty as to its really being the inspired expression of the mind of God. He often referred with great distress to the case of a University student who had resolved to study at the Aberdeen Hall, till the writings of Professor Robertson Smith so shattered his faith that he turned to a secular pursuit. Gladly would he have welcomed that firmer faith that had been promised, if he had seen any evidence of its existence; had this plainly appeared, it would have gone far to neutralise the objections that continued to press on him so strongly.

And as time passed on, he failed to see any improvement in what was evidently the weakest point in the position of the critics—their attempt to reconcile the two facts—that the legislation of Deuteronomy was ascribed to Moses, but was not really the work of Moses. Dr. Brown would not have applied the expression ‘pious fraud’ to the explanation commonly given of this; but, taking Professor Smith’s phrase, ‘literary form,’ and his reference to our Lord’s parables and similar forms of speech, where certain things were

said to have taken place, when in point of fact they had not taken place, but were perfectly understood in another sense, he retained all his former objections to this explanation, and did not find that anything better had been advanced. It was simply impossible to take the plain historical statements of a plain historical narrative in a non-historical sense. In his view the theory introduced an element of actual untruthfulness into the narrative. While it sought to remove historical difficulties, it created moral difficulties in a book whose character would be ruined by any immoral element. As long as the theory was subject to this objection, it could not be generally accepted. It would not filter into the devout mind, nor be accepted generally by a believing church. It might be accepted in books, but it would be little heard of in the pulpit. Even in Bible-classes it would be handled with a sense of awkwardness, and in an apologetic spirit. For men feel that from first to last the Bible is an honest book, and that to impeach its honesty is to destroy its character.

Dr. Brown was too candid a man, and too open-minded, not to admit that in some points the views of the critics possessed considerable weight. How far he would have gone with them, we cannot say. He certainly would not have treated them with indiscriminate condemnation. He prayed for the time when all that was really true in their contentings would be cordially admitted and thankfully received, while at the same time no slur should be thrown on the simplicity, the naturalness, and the essential truthfulness of the sacred narrative.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEW TESTAMENT REVISION COMPANY

(1870-1880)

THE appointment of Dr. Brown as a member of the Revision Company was alike honourable in itself and congenial to his habits and feelings. Far on in life though he was, he entered on its work, and continued at it, with all the zest and enthusiasm of youth. He lived at a very great distance from London, and whenever he attended the meetings of the Company during his college session, he had to make up to his students at home for the hours which they had lost by his absence, so that the undertaking was peculiarly burdensome to him. Yet, out of 407 meetings, he was present at 209. When in London he was often the guest of Dean Stanley and Lady Augusta, both of whom had a great liking for him. And among his brethren of the Company he was very popular, although certain of his views on important questions were different from those of the majority.

The members of the distinguished Company with whom he was thus associated were the following, according to an official list, issued at the date specified. Dr. Eadie and others, who had been among them at first, were now dead.

NEW TESTAMENT REVISION COMPANY

July 1879

- The Right Rev. the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol
(*Chairman*), Palace, Gloucester.
- The Right Rev. the Bishop of Salisbury, Palace, Salisbury.
- The Very Rev. the Prolocutor, Deanery, Lichfield.
- The Very Rev. the Dean of Westminster, Deanery, Westminster, S.W.
- The Very Rev. the Dean of Rochester, Deanery, Rochester.
- The Very Rev. the Dean of Lincoln, Deanery, Lincoln.
- The Most Rev. the Archbishop of Dublin, Palace, Dublin.
- The Right Rev. the Bishop of Durham, Auckland Castle,
Bishop Auckland.
- The Right Rev. the Bishop of St. Andrews, Bishopshall, St.
Andrews, N.B.
- The Rev. Dr. Angus, Baptist College, Regent's Park,
London, N.W.
- The Rev. Principal Brown, Free Church College, Aberdeen.
- The Rev. Professor Hort, 6 St. Peter's Terrace, Cambridge.
- The Rev. W. G. Humphry, Vicarage, St. Martin's-in-the-
Fields, London, W.C.
- The Rev. Canon Kennedy, The Elms, Cambridge.
- The Ven. the Archdeacon of Dublin, 24 Merrion Square,
Dublin.
- The Rev. Professor Milligan, University, Aberdeen.
- The Rev. Dr. Moulton, The Leys, Cambridge.
- The Rev. Principal Newth, New College, Hampstead,
London, N.W.
- The Ven. the Archdeacon of Oxford, Ch. Ch., Oxford.
- The Rev. Professor Roberts, St. Andrews, N.B.
- The Rev. Prebendary Scrivener, Hendon Vicarage, Lon-
don, N.W.
- The Rev. Dr. G. Vance Smith, 5 Parade, Carmarthen.

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The Very Rev. the Master of the Temple, The Temple,
London, E.C.

The Rev. Canon Westcott, Trinity College, Cambridge.

The Rev. J. Troutbeck (*Secretary*), 4 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W.

Of the place which he held in the Revision Company it will be best to give the opinion of some of his brethren who were most competent to judge. The first whose estimate we have is the Right Rev. Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, Chairman of the Company, as expressed in a letter to the present writer.

‘GLOUCESTER, *December 7, 1897.*

‘MY DEAR SIR,—I had the greatest regard for dear Dr. David Brown, and so had we all, but I find that I cannot recall anything in connection with the Revision which would be of special interest to the Biographer. Dr. Brown's attendance, when the distance from which he came is remembered, was good—209 attendances out of a total of 407.

‘His characteristic was suggestion rather than direct proposal. His suggestions always showed *acumen*, and bore the stamp of being the opinions which he deliberately held, but he never sought for them, and, as I often thought, left them too much to their own merits; for all his suggestions were valuable, and would most likely have been more frequently accepted, if he had shown cause. But this was not his line. He obviously felt inwardly that they were right, and that seemed to content him.

‘There was something simple and charming in the “well, never mind,” with which he accepted the judgment of the Company, and passed onward with them to

new points. Never, so far as I can remember, did I see his gentle, childlike spirit ruffled even for a moment.

‘It would have been strange indeed if we had not learned to regard with real affection our amiable and lovable colleague.

‘I am sorry that I cannot remember anything more worthy of your letter than what I have written.—Very faithfully yours,

C. J. GLOUCESTER.

‘Rev. Dr. Garden Blaikie.’

Our next estimate is that of the Right Rev. Dr. Westcott, Bishop of Durham, from some of whose views (as we shall see) Dr. Brown decidedly differed.

‘AUCKLAND CASTLE, BISHOP AUCKLAND,

‘November 26, 1897.

‘MY DEAR SIR,—I wish I could help you in the way you name, but I am wholly unable to put together any recollections of Dr. Brown at Revision which would be of the least interest. I had a sincere affection for him, but that was directed to his attractive personality. On critical points we differed very widely, and I did not feel able to recognise the principle by which his judgments were guided. He seemed to us to be very largely influenced by subjective reasons which it was difficult to follow. Dr. Roberts of St. Andrews was much in agreement with him, and he might be able to give you some reminiscences. Dr. Brown’s account of his connection with Mr. Irving was of the deepest interest and importance. I valued his friendship very highly, and we corresponded at intervals to the end of his life. But it was the man I was drawn to, rather than the scholar. I remember that he sent me, with great satisfaction, a copy of Dr. Robertson Smith’s inaugural lecture, on which later events made a strange commentary.

‘With sincere regret for what may seem strange inability to help you.—Yours most faithfully,

‘Rev. W. Garden Blaikie, D.D.’

B. F. DUNELM.

We have much satisfaction in presenting the ample and interesting contribution of the Rev. Professor Roberts, D.D., of the University of St. Andrews.

‘It would be difficult to say, whether the appearance of Dr. Brown at the meetings of the New Testament Company was more acceptable to the English members or the Scotch. He always brought with him a breeziness, so to speak, from his native hills, which seemed to exert quite an invigorating influence over the work in hand, and an energy as well as liveliness, so far as he was concerned. As is well known, Dr. Brown was considerably over the allotted period of human life before the Revision meetings began, but this really seemed to have very little effect in depressing his own spirit, or in preventing him from taking a useful and active part in the work of the Company. The only great drawback which he felt, and which others also could not but in some degree feel, was his increasing deafness, for, as our chairman one morning genially remarked, “Dr. Brown’s ears are not now so good as they once were.” But notwithstanding this, our venerable friend, without being troublesome to others, did, by his earnest attention and inquiries, generally succeed in grasping the questions at issue, and in forming an intelligent comprehension of the points under consideration.

‘It is evident that, in accomplishing the purpose set before them, the Company had to deal with two points

—first, that of the *Text*, and secondly, that of the *Translation*. Manifestly little or nothing would be secured by improving the translation, unless it were first settled that that translation rested on an improved text. Here, however, the question arose, how far the revisers should go in forming a more correct text, this leading to the further question, how far they should go in altering the translation. The instructions given to the Company were, that the changes under both heads should be as sparing as fidelity to the original would permit. The following general principles were laid down as their guide:—

“1. To introduce as few alterations as possible in the text of the Authorised Version, consistently with faithfulness.

“2. To limit, as far as possible, the expression of such alterations to the language of the Authorised and earlier English versions.”

‘Still, even this restriction was wide enough to permit very different views as to the length to which the Revisers should go, both with respect to text and translation. As in every similar association of men, two tendencies might be expected to appear—the truly conservative, which clung to the old readings and renderings if possible, in preference to those which were new—and the more liberal, which was inclined, at the risk of sacrificing much that was old, to approach as nearly as possible to an absolutely perfect version.

‘Now, Dr. Brown, like all his Scottish brethren, tended strongly towards the conservative side. The five members who originally represented Scotland—the Bishop of St. Andrews, Drs. Eadie, Brown,

Milligan, and Roberts, were, with a good deal of cross-voting for a time, to be ranked among the upholders of the text and translation as they stand, Dr. Milligan being the only one who stood side by side with Dr. Hort as an advocate of what the other party thought uncalled-for change. All the members named, with the exception of Dr. Eadie, who died before the different views of the two sections were fully matured, expressed themselves in writing against the unduly wide scope, as they imagined, which the Revision had assumed in the hands of the majority of the Company. Dr. Brown was specially emphatic on this point. He often stated to the writer his dissent from the manifold, and as it seemed both to him and to me, unnecessary latitude of change which had been accepted by the Revisers. On the very last occasion on which I saw him (then above his ninetieth year), he almost vehemently repudiated the principles maintained by Dr. Hort and his followers. It appeared as if in his recoil he were willing to accept the extreme views of Dr. Burgon, who, as all the world knows, though not a member of the Company, took a lively interest in its proceedings, and published a learned work entitled, *The Revision Revised*, exposing what he thought the false principles and groundless criticisms of the Revisers.

‘With respect to the translation, Dr. Brown was guided by arguments analogous to those that had influenced his mind with respect to the settlement of the text. He thought that the Revisers had in this particular gone far astray; and, while he rejoiced in many of the valuable corrections which had been made,

lamented that these were to a great extent neutralised by the new renderings which had been introduced. In fact, he held that, speaking roughly, the changes resulting from alterations of the text might be limited to hundreds, while those springing from changes resting on a change of translation should at any rate not exceed thousands.

‘I much regret that during the last years of Dr. Brown’s long life, I did not preserve the various letters, which in a state of practical blindness he wrote to me on this subject. The last time I saw him was in October 1895, and I found him in the best of spirits, as well as still full of those great Biblical questions which had been to him such engrossing subjects of interest during many by-past years.

‘To conclude this brief and imperfect sketch, I may notice one occasion in our revision work, in which Dr. Brown took a prominent part. Many other occasions doubtless occurred, but these have now faded from my remembrance. It was not a point of any great importance, and the Company was in general prepared for it, but to Dr. Brown is undoubtedly due the suggestion that the words ‘to this’ should be inserted in St. John iii. 33, so that the passage reads, “He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this,” that God is true.

‘Another occasion may be referred to, as illustrative of the kind of minute changes to which the Scottish division of the Company in general objected. It was proposed by the Dean of Rochester that the great fontal text of the Gospel of St. John iii. 16, “God

so loved the world," etc., should be changed by the substitution of *may* for *should*, so as to read, "Whosoever believeth in Him *may* not perish." I ventured to oppose this as unnecessary, and was supported by the majority of my fellow-countrymen, while the Dean, with that courtesy which distinguished him, and indeed all the members of the Company in their intercourse with each other, consented at once to withdraw his suggestion in deference (as he said) to the opinion of Scotland.'

We had expected to be able to add here the tribute of another member of the Company, the Rev. Dr. Moulton of Cambridge, with whom we had the pleasure of an interesting conversation in November 1897. Dr. Moulton spoke in the warmest terms of his intercourse with Dr. Brown, his esteem and affection for him, and his pleasure in learning that there was to be a Memoir of him. He was overwhelmed with work owing to the illness of one of his assistants in the Leys school, but promised to try to find time to look out some of Dr. Brown's letters and record some of his own reminiscences. This last would have been the more interesting that he did not agree with him in some important questions of revision. Our readers are probably aware that Dr. Moulton died quite suddenly in February 1898, at a comparatively early age, to the great sorrow of his friends and loss to the community.

In Dr. Roberts's paper, he has stated correctly the two great questions that engaged the attention of the Revisers,—the revision of the text, and the improvement of the translation. Dr. Brown was strongly opposed

to the principles on which Drs. Hort, Westcott, and others sought to revise the text; and with regard to the translation, while he thought that unnecessary and undesirable alterations had often been introduced, he held that on some very important points, the Revised Version was a great improvement on the old. Dr. Brown's interest in the subject seemed rather to increase than fade away after the Revised New Testament was issued. Again and again he wrote papers on it in reviews and magazines, and at one time he had all but made up his mind to write a book—a project never carried out. In one of his review articles—contributed to the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* (edited by Professor Warfield of Princeton)—he expresses himself pretty freely as to the merits of the Revised Version, and gives a glimpse of the manner in which the work proceeded. Referring to the opinion of the Rev. Dr. Field of Norwich, as expressed in a letter to Dr. Schaff of New York, to the effect that the English of the Revised Version was 'fifth-form English,' with which opinion he agreed, he adds—

'In saying this, however, I more or less condemn myself. For when the itch of change (if I may so speak) took possession of the Company, I was infected by it. But as the work went on, I was one of those who saw that the changes which were being made were not only far too many, but, out of a desire to squeeze out the last shred of the sense, were destroying the purity of the English, and all hope of our version being accepted by the public.' So strong was this apprehension, that when the work was all but completed, I said to my friend Dr. Moulton, the able translator of

Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament Greek*,—who voted for nearly all the changes to which the minority objected—"This version of ours will never do; the public will never take to it"—"Oh yes, they will; only give them time to get accustomed to it."—"They never will," was my answer; and we now know who was right.'

Drs. Hort and Westcott, as we have said, were the great advocates for the new text which the Revisers accepted in many instances, although they did not carry it out to the full extent to which it is accepted in their edition of the Greek New Testament. On the other hand, Dr. Brown firmly opposed it. In one of his papers in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* (October 1885), he states the grounds of his opposition, by examining a number of passages in which the new text was adopted, while (as he thought) there were strong reasons for rejecting it. Granting that the older manuscripts contained the new text, he objected to this being made the one decisive test, to the exclusion of other considerations that seemed to show that after all it was not the true text, but that an error had been committed by the copyist. Out of the many instances which he gives of this, we select as a specimen one bearing on Rev. xv. 6. In the Authorised Version it runs, 'And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven last plagues, clothed in pure and white linen (λίνον) and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.' In the Revised Version, 'And after these things . . . there came out of the temple the seven angels . . . arrayed with *precious* stone (λίθον) pure and bright.' The question is, Is λίνον, linen, or λίθον,

stone, the true reading? The Revisers, on the authority of the earlier mss., decided for λίθον, which Dr. Brown considered to give a nonsensical meaning, showing it to be a mistake of the copyist, and therefore to be summarily rejected. His critical remarks are somewhat long, but they show some of the reasons which Bishop Westcott tells us he sometimes found it difficult to apprehend.

‘Now, though I should be sorry to treat this reading in the bantering style of Sir Edmund Beckett, his arguments against it, which had occurred to myself before I read them,¹ will not be easily refuted. But as I have something of my own to say, I will put the case in the way that suits my own ideas. (1) Angels are often represented in Scripture as appearing to men, and usually their *dress*—evidently symbolical—is described. But where do we ever read of their having anything upon them of the nature of *ornament*, and does not the idea of a company of *ornamented angels* issuing from the temple strike one as something ludicrous? But (2) even though this difficulty could be got over, would it be natural, supposing this to be the true reading, to express the sense of it in this form, “clothed with stone,” in the singular number, and with no adjective to denote the quality of the stone? To obviate this manifest incongruity the Revisers have inserted—with what right, the reader may ask—the supplement “*precious*,” and still further to relieve the repulsiveness of the statement, have rendered it “arrayed with *precious* stone.” But in vindication of what Dr. Hort justly calls “the bold image” of this reading, he refers, after Tischendorf, to the LXX. rendering of Ezek. xxviii.

¹ *Should the Revised New Testament be Authorised?* Murray, 1882, pp. 179-182.

13, as the Latin fathers who so read were fain to do. But the cases are entirely different. In the passage referred to, the King of Tyrus in his pride is thus addressed: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; thou hast been clothed with every precious stone, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold." To which I answer, it is one thing to describe, as beheld in vision, a proud *mortal man* strutting about in all the splendour that nine or ten of the most precious stones would make him to glitter in—after the manner of Oriental monarchs—a splendour of which he was soon to be stripped; but a very different thing, surely, it would be to describe a vision of *angels* issuing forth from the temple of God *so decorated*, for the purpose of pouring out vials of wrath upon an accursed system or its votaries. In the former case costly ornaments, such as Orientals pride themselves upon in proportion to their rarity and number, suitably represent the very thing intended; in the latter the incongruity is too apparent to need pointing out. Besides, in Ezekiel the stones are specified, and the word "precious" is suitably added, even though their names might have rendered that superfluous—"every precious stone" (πάντα λίθον χρηστόν): whereas here the naked word "stone"—in the singular number, and with no qualifying adjective—is enough to condemn the reading as plainly an error, and all the rather as it is created by the mere substitution of one letter for another—the two words being otherwise identical. (3) Though the epithets "pure and bright" are applicable enough to precious stones, it is worthy of note that in another chapter of this same book these are the words which are applied to the "fine linen" in which the bride, the Lamb's wife, was seen arrayed (Rev. xix. 8). To this it is replied

that there the word used for "fine linen" is its usual word, βύσσινος, whereas in our passage the word used in the received text is λίνον, which is never used for fine linen. But this rather strengthens the argument for the received text. For the very reason why βύσσινος is *not* used here is that the *fineness* of the linen is expressed by no fewer than two adjectives—"pure, bright" (καθαρόν λαμπρόν)—so that, were we to translate literally, without inserting the word "fine" at all—thus, "clothed in linen, pure, bright"—the whole idea of the received reading would be perfectly brought out. (4) If still it be asked whether it would not be more natural for copyists to change the harsh word "stone" in such a passage into the smooth word "linen," than the reverse—I answer, "Yes, if we could suppose this done *intentionally*," but that we never suppose: we hold it to be a pure mistake—the substitution of one letter for another, giving to one word which, in every other letter is identical with another, a sense totally different. Bengel's rule—that the rough reading is preferable to the smooth one, *cæteris paribus*—is an excellent one. But to apply it to mere blunders is to abuse it.

'A word now on the textual evidence. Of the Apocalypse only five Uncials are known to exist, and only three of the oldest class, $\aleph$ A C, with B₂ (eighth century), and P₂ (ninth century), and several cursives. Reckoning versions, the evidence is fairly balanced: For the revised text (λίθον), AC, three cursives and the margin of another, the two best copies of the Vulgate, and "some mss. known to Andreas" (an Apocalyptic commentator of sixth century) but who himself does not adopt it: For the received text (λίνον, variously written λινουν, ληνουν, ληνους, ληνον), $\aleph$ B₂P₂, Latin mss. known to Haymo (ninth century), copies of the Vulgate, the Clementine edition of Vulgate, the Syriac and Armenian; and of the fathers Tichonius (fourth century), Andreas and Primasius (sixth century).

‘ Thus viewed, this repulsive reading has not even such textual evidence as should alone entitle it to a hearing. The more regrettable, therefore, is its presence in the Revised Version.’¹

In a paper contributed to the *Thinker* (of similar tenor to papers in other Journals), Dr. Brown mentions a somewhat notable circumstance as to the degree of attention which the Revisionists generally had bestowed on the study of the text of the New Testament :—

‘ There are two ways in which their text ’ (Westcott and Hort’s) ‘ may be tried. One is by a critical examination of Dr. Hort’s volume. This has been done, briefly indeed, as only a limited space was at his disposal, by the late admirable scholar, Dr. Scrivener, in the third edition of his *Introduction to the Criticism of the Greek Testament*. But this is what many of the best scholars are not competent to do ; for textual criticism, especially in application to the Greek Testament, is a difficult and complicated subject, requiring much time and labour to master. In fact, in the New Testament Revision Company, though containing some of the best classical scholars in Europe, it was found that of some twenty-five or twenty-seven members, the great majority had never made this a subject of special study. Indeed, when the various readings had to be discussed and decided upon, Dr. Scott (of *Liddell and Scott’s Greek Lexicon*) declined to give his judgment, not being an expert, and it was not until both sides of a disputed reading had been heard that he felt entitled to give

¹ Of the critical editors, Lachmann, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort read *ἄθρο*, while Griesbach and Tischendorf retain *ἄθρο*.

his vote. And the New Testament Company, for the most part, followed the leading of these two great scholars.'

But while Dr. Brown continued to the very last to controvert the grounds on which the new text had been preferred to the old, and while he never scrupled to express regret at the many little changes which, to those familiar with the old version, seemed to take away much of the charm of the old book, he was far from accepting the view of those who regarded the Revised Version as an absolute failure, and who allowed themselves to apply to it the language of unmitigated censure. He did not like the bantering style of Sir Edmund Beckett, nor the extremes of Dean Burgon, nor the slashing criticism of Canon Cook. In fact, Canon Cook's *Criticism of the Revised Version of the First Three Gospels* provoked him to a sort of Apologia for the Revision, contributed in 1884 to the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. In dealing with this book, Dr. Brown used stronger language than was his wont. It seemed very strange to him that the Editor of the *Speaker's Commentary* should be so strong in his condemnation of many of the alterations in the Revised Version, for which he conceived there was ample reason. One of the alterations on which he comments is that which the new version makes of Luke ii. 49, where the old version has, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' and the new, 'Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?'

On this Canon Cook remarks:—

'I cannot think that the Revisers were justified in altering the Authorised Version here, and substituting for

it "in My Father's house." This may be the true meaning of the Greek, but it is far from certain. With their own marginal alternative, and their somewhat awkward rendering of the Greek before them, it seems a bold thing to condemn the Authorised Version as being a *plain* and *clear* error. In fact, "in the things" is a very awkward rendering. The Greek is ambiguous, and I believe it is purposely chosen as a comprehensive expression. Our Lord chooses words which implicitly declared the whole purpose of His life on earth; but that was to be "about His Father's business," engaged in His earthly affairs, certainly not in His Father's house, if by the house is meant the temple . . . an unnecessary and unsatisfactory change.'

In the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* Dr. Brown gives us a little history of this change:—

'When the Chairman of the English Company read out this verse, he said, "I suppose no one will propose to change this?"—"Yes, I will," I said, being convinced that this supplement [*i.e.* the insertion of the word *business*] does not give the true sense of the clause. The words are ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου, "in the . . . of My Father." This may mean "in the business," or, "in the premises" (or *house*) "of My Father." I hold that *house* is the right supplement. Our Lord never did His Father's *business* till He began His public ministry. After His first visit with His parents to Jerusalem, He went down with them to Nazareth, and *was subject to them*. But at His first *public* appearance (at the marriage feast), when His mother hinted to Him that there was a want of wine, He bluntly said, "Woman, *what have I to do with thee?* *Mine hour is not yet come.*" Further, as Meyer well says, His answer to the question of His mother was not to the point, if *business* is the proper supplement. For she did not want

to know what He had been doing, but where He had been. "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."—"My Father has not been seeking Me," is His reply. "I have been with Him all this time—in His house, the temple."

'To my surprise' (continues Dr. Brown), 'this reading of the verse was unanimously adopted. But when the time for the *second* revision of the Gospel came, they had forgotten, I suppose, their reason for accepting this rendering of the verse, and restored the Authorised Version, putting the other in the margin. But a pointed criticism on this change, by Dr. Field of Norwich, sent to all the members, produced a great change. He regretted they had not kept to the supplement "*house*," giving seven or eight references to similar ellipses; showing that a Greek would, in such a case, understand *house* and not *business* to be the proper supplement; adding that the Syriac version took it so. And as Dr. Field was known to be among the greatest scholars in the English Church, they at once restored "*house*" to the text, and put the Authorised Version in the margin.'

Perhaps we shall best show what Dr. Brown's estimate was of the value of the labours of the Revisers by copying a note which he wrote on the fly-leaf of a Revised Version of the Bible, presented by him to his daughter, Miss Meredith Brown.

REVISED VERSION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

'Of the merits of this work, there are two extreme opinions: (1) Those who desired and expected no more change on the Authorised Version than the correction of manifest or serious errors, will think that it has gone a great deal too far, and thus lost its chance of ever

superseding the Authorised Version. (2) Those who thought that if undertaken at all, it should have made the translation out of the originals as perfect as possible, no matter what change on the Authorised Version this should demand, will regret that it has not gone farther, believing that to get the real sense of the Scriptures is of more importance than the smoothness and beauty of the language in which it is conveyed.

‘Between these extremes, there is a growing opinion in favour of the Revised Version. The Revisers, claiming no infallibility of judgment as to what was their appointed duty, did their best to strike the proper medium: First, to render the sense of the original *correctly*, but at the same time remembering that they were translating, not for the *learned*, but for the *people*; to prepare not a scholar’s Bible, but one for all who speak the English tongue, they did not deem it warrantable to deviate unnecessarily from the language of the Authorised Version. They strove to bear in mind that their task was not to make a *new* translation, but only to *revise* one that had endeared itself so justly to the whole English-speaking Christian world.

‘How far they have kept both these objects *steadily* and *sufficiently* in view, must for a long time be matter of opinion. That they have not always done this, the minorities, both in the Old Testament Company and in the New, sufficiently show; and some even of the majorities may perhaps think that they themselves might judge in some cases differently now. In the Old Testament, the English deviates less than in the New Testament from that of the Authorised Version; and there was less difficulty in the original *text* (as to what

it originally was) than in the New Testament. Hence, the general opinion will probably be more in favour of the Revised Old Testament than of the Revised New Testament. But the task of the New Testament Revisers was for that reason more difficult; and for myself, though I regret many of the *textual* changes, even some of these are a decided gain, and I voted cordially for them. And as to the *translation*, though I regret that in not a few places the Authorised Version has been needlessly departed from, it is hardly possible to express the obligation under which they have laid the English-speaking *students* of the New Testament for the improvement they have made on the *sense* of the original—an improvement which will be best appreciated by a careful comparison of the original with the rendering of it in this version, and the sense of which will *grow* upon the student the longer and the more closely he examines it.

‘DAVID BROWN,

‘One of the New Testament Revisers.

‘ABERDEEN, Dec. 22, 1885.’

It will be remembered that Dr. Brown's connection was solely with the New Testament Company. The other Company carried on their labours under somewhat different conditions, and with the result, as Dr. Brown states, of producing a version which has commended itself more to the general reader.

CHAPTER XV

CORRESPONDENCE WITH DR. J. H. NEWMAN

DR. BROWN combined in a very unusual degree profound loyalty to his own creed and church, with a large charity to other churches and other men. Knowing his own mind, and able to maintain his own views with equal decision and power, no man was more disposed to kindly feeling and genial hopefulness even for some from whom narrower men would have supposed him separated by an unpassable gulf. He had a quick eye for the soul of good that often lies amid heaps of evil, and the spark of truth that is all but smothered by clouds of error. He knew that logic does not rule everything; that error is often self-inconsistent; and that some men are better than their creed, while other men are often worse than theirs. He could hold the Church of Rome to be the Antichrist of the Apocalypse, and yet believe that within her pale the Lord had His faithful servants. He could find this comforting truth in the very words of the warning, 'Come out of her, my people'; for how could Christ's people be called to come out of her if they were not in her? He could make ample allowance for 'wood, hay, stubble,' on the true foundation, and believe that even good men may have helped to lay them there, whose work would certainly

be burnt up in the end, though they themselves might be saved, yet so as by fire.

Unless this should be kept in view, some would be concerned to learn that he held friendly correspondence with such men as Dr. J. H. Newman and Dr. James Martineau; that he paid Dr. Newman friendly visits at the Oratory; and that Dr. Martineau, besides holding much friendly intercourse with him, attended the services which he conducted one autumn in the Free Church of Braemar, when they were spending their holidays there together. Nothing would have induced him to compromise his testimony, whether against the Church of Rome at the one extreme, or against Unitarianism at the other. But he was struck with the earnest search for truth and profound devotion of such men; he believed that in some very vital truths he and they agreed; and he thought that by friendly intercourse and correspondence their disagreements might be lessened, and they might be brought to accept the whole circle of evangelical truth.

His first acquaintance with Dr. Newman came from his sending him a copy of his *Life of Dr. Duncan*, inscribed as 'From the author.' Dr. Newman received the book with pleasure, and possibly with an unavowed sense of satisfaction that a Presbyterian minister should think him likely to be interested in it.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to obtain the letters of Dr. Brown to Dr. Newman; but the occasions of them were generally the despatch of lectures or other publications, the tenor of which we know, so that in most cases Dr. Newman's allusions to them can be easily understood. Evidently Dr. Brown attached

great importance to the letters, and seems to have expected that they would be made public. In a footnote to an article on another subject in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, he says: 'I had asked my publisher to send him a copy of a book of mine (*The Life of Dr. John Duncan*), which he acknowledged in a letter to myself; and as this book revealed to him much both about my friend and myself with which he sympathised, a correspondence ensued which continued for years. . . . Copies of eighteen of his letters are now in the hands of his literary executor, and will appear when his *Letters* are published. The best of Dr. Newman, along with his defects, will never be known till these letters are published.'

After receiving his letter of thanks, Dr. Brown sent him some additional sayings of Dr. Duncan, and called his attention to the depth of his confessions, and likewise to his high regard for the Gospels. After a short delay, he received the following acknowledgment:—

‘THE ORATORY, Oct. 24, 1872.

‘MY DEAR SIR,—Pray do not suppose that my delay in answering your very kind letter has arisen from indifference to it. I feel extremely, and thank you for the warmth of your language about me, and I wish to return it to you. What a mystery it is in this day that there should be so much which draws religious minds together, and so much which separates them from each other! Never did members of the various Christian communions feel such tenderness for each other, yet never were the obstacles greater or stronger which divide them. What a melancholy thought is this—and when will a better day come?’

‘I am glad to have the addition to Dr. Duncan’s

sayings which you send me. Those are remarkable confessions which you point out to me. I suppose he exaggerated what he said of himself, as a serious man would naturally do on revising his life; but certainly it used to seem to me thirty years ago to be one of the faults of the English evangelical school that they depreciated the Gospels, and seemed to know nothing of the New Testament beyond one or two texts of St. Paul. A friend told me about the year 1826 that he was walking and talking with a dissenting acquaintance, and happened to quote in defence of what he had said some words of our Lord. On which his companion stopped short and said to him, "Where do those words occur?" and on his answering, "In the Gospels," the other replied, "My dear friend, don't you know you have quoted a most unevangelical part of Scripture?" It seems to me the first step towards any chances of unity amid our divisions is for religious minds, one and all, to live upon the Gospels.—I am, my dear Sir, most truly yours,

JOHN H. NEWMAN.'

Next year Dr. Brown sent him a copy of a lecture, which seems to have been the Inaugural Lecture of which an account has already been given (page 118, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life'). A sermon was sent soon after. The acknowledgments follow:—

'THE ORATORY, *Jan. 11, 1873.*

'MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for the copy of your lecture, which I was glad to have. It seems to me you take the true and the normal way of meeting the infidelity of the age, by referring to our Lord's Person and Character as exhibited in the Gospels. Philip said to Nathanael, "Come and see"—that is just what the present Free-thinkers will not allow men to do. They perplex and

bewilder them with previous questions, to hinder them falling under the legitimate influence of His divine life, of His sacred words and acts. They say, "There is no truth, because there are so many opinions," or, "How do you know that the Gospels are authentic?" "How do you account for Papias not mentioning the fourth Gospel?" or, "Why is there not stronger proof of the Resurrection?" With this multitude of questions in detail they block the way between the soul and its Saviour, and will not "come and see."

'We act otherwise in matters of this world. A judge says, "I am not satisfied with affidavits—I want to see the witnesses face to face." In the novel [*The Heart of Midlothian*, by Sir Walter Scott] the Duke of Argyle thought nothing better than to introduce Jenny Deans to her Majesty—"She will speak for herself." Such was the effect of our Lord's presence that His hearers said, "Never man spake as He spake"; but this is just what we should not be allowed to do at all if these new lights had their way. All one can say is, that miserable as it is, it is so unnatural, that I should think it cannot have success for any long time, but common-sense will reassert its sway over men's minds.

'I hope you will excuse me for thus running on. As to the remarks in your letter, I wish I saw as hopefully as you do the prospects of Christendom, relatively to its mutual divisions. I can understand that infidelity has no vitality; but what will kill the vigorous life with which those whom I agree with hold the Catholic Church to be the work of God, and with which other men consider it the work of the evil one? God's grace can do all things; but how is either party to give up their own tenet on the point without losing their Christianity?—Very sincerely yours,

JOHN H. NEWMAN.'

‘THE ORATORY, Jan. 18, 1873.

‘MY DEAR SIR,—I assure you, I thought it a very happy accident that, without your intending it, you gave me an opportunity to show you my sense of your kindness towards me in giving me *Dr. Duncan’s Life*.

‘Thank you for the sermon you now send me. You need not be afraid of hurting me by what you say in contrariety to my own religious belief. I may think, as of course I do, that I am right, and those who differ from me wrong; but it does not mend matters for us to conceal our mutual differences, and nothing is more unmeaning, as well as more untrue, than compromises and comprehensions. Of course, unreal, and but verbal, differences do exist between religious men, but such are not the differences which exist between Catholics and their opponents. It would be best if they did not exist; it is next best to confess them, plainly though in charity.—
Very sincerely yours,
JOHN H. NEWMAN.’

Later in the year Dr. Brown sent Dr. Newman a passage which some ascribed to Augustine, but which seemed to him to be of later origin, bearing on the Unity of the Church. It is interesting to observe the kindly ingenuity with which he combines tenacity and charity, holding firmly to his own view, yet finding a kind word to speak of his opponents.

‘THE ORATORY, Nov. 3, 1873.

‘DEAR DR. BROWN,—You know I do not profess to have any great knowledge of St. Augustine’s works; but, as far as I have a right to judge, I agree with you.

‘The passage is unlike anything I have met with in St. Augustine; on the other hand, it is quite in the tone of writers of the school of Melancthon and Gerhard, not to say of Calvin.

‘Painful as it is to witness the ineffectual yearnings after unity on all hands, of which you speak, still it is hopeful also. We may hope that our good God has not put it into the hearts of religious men to raise a prayer for unity without intending in His own time to fulfil the prayer. And since the bar against unity is a conscientious feeling, and a reverence for what each party holds itself to be the truth, and a desire to maintain the faith, we may humbly hope that in our day, and till He discloses to the hearts of men what the true faith is, He will, where hearts are honest, take the will for the deed.—~~Most sincerely yours,~~

Cardinal Newman ‘JOHN H. NEWMAN,’ *in Life of David Brown D.D. 2.2*

In 1874 he sent him a lecture on Science and Religion. A public lecture on Evolution had just been delivered by a popular professor; and Dr. Brown thought it right, not to controvert the scientific array of facts on which evolution rests, but to show that it cannot overthrow the grand truths both of natural and revealed religion. He was quite prepared to allow that evolution to a certain extent may have been a factor in the development of creation, and that natural selection may have been the principle on which evolution proceeded. Some evolutionists acknowledged the Creator and His work, and for that he was grateful. But many wrote as if God were not needed, and their system resolved itself into sheer materialism, in which there was no distinction between body and soul, but all resolved itself into matter, and even conscience was only a development of what was found in animals when they felt they had done wrong. In fact, man was but a developed brute. He dwelt strongly on the absolute inconsistency of this with the great Bible doctrine of the Resurrection, both in

regard to the restoration of the body, and to the account which every man was to give of his life, not as the inevitable result of natural laws, but as determined by his own will and under the authority of conscience, which made him a responsible being. Then he contrasted the godless sentiments of Mr. Grove, at the opening of the British Association, with those of Bacon and Kepler. Although evolutionists could not but admit that the plasticity, as it is called, of nature must have been originated by some great force or cause, yet of that first cause they were entirely ignorant. 'Throughout all that elegant discourse of his I have found myself roaming about without a Maker, a universe teeming with life and order and beauty, but without a Contriver; with adaptations which only a Mind could form, but with no Adapter; overspread with beneficence, but the Beneficent Himself nowhere; with no Author, no Conservator, no Ruler, no Father; and, what is far more painful, with the irrepressible yearnings of the heart after Him coldly discouraged, and the disagreeable feeling left on the mind that with all that sort of thing science has nothing to do.' How different the noble spirit of Kepler's prayer! 'Behold, I have here completed a work of my calling with as much of intellectual strength as Thou hast granted to me. . . . But if anything unworthy of Thee has been taught by me, a worm born and nourished in sin, do Thou teach me that I may correct it. Have I been seduced into corruption by the admirable beauty of Thy works, or have I sought my own glory among men in the construction of a mock design for Thy honour? O then, graciously forgive me, and finally

grant me this favour, that this work may never be injurious, but may conduce to Thy glory and the good of souls.'

'THE ORATORY, *Easter Eve*, 1874.

'MY DEAR DR. BROWN,—I have perused with great pleasure the powerful lecture which you have been so good as to send me. It is spoken from the heart, and appeals to the heart. The old Tractarians, thirty or forty years ago, were the first to protest against the British Association then beginning. My dear friend, the late Mr. Bowden, wrote a strong article against it in the *British Critic*, of which I was at that time editor. Our deep suspicion of it was because, in spite of its being a scientific Society, it would meddle with religion. It then undertook the office of patronising it by a mild, cold Deism, such as Dr. Maltbey, Bishop of Durham, used at the opening, or laying the first stone, of the (then) London University. But those who praise can blame; and now for Deism it has taken up Atheism. For myself, I have shunned its presence from the first. I think I left Oxford when it held its meeting there, and when, as was suitable to its then professions, Ramuhun Roy came down from London to attend it.

'Doubtless theologians have meddled with science, and now scientific men are paying them off by meddling with theology. With you, I see nothing in the theory of evolution inconsistent with an Almighty Creator and Protector; but these men assume, assume with an abundant scorn of us and superciliousness, that religion and science are on this point contradictory, and on this audacious assumption they proceed dogmatically to conclude that there is no truth in religion. It is dreadful to think of the number of souls that will suffer while the epidemic lasts; but truth is too powerful not in the end to get the upper hand.

'I think you do not keep this season, to us so holy; but you will allow me, I am sure, to send you a Catholic's

best Easter wishes, and to pray for you all the blessings of the Gospel.—Very sincerely yours,

‘JOHN H. NEWMAN.’

At the beginning of the session 1873-74, Dr. Brown opened the session with a lecture on the ‘Helplessness of Modern Unbelief,’ of which he sent a copy to Dr. Newman. To explain Dr. Newman’s reply, it may be stated that the lecture began with Mr. Herbert Spencer’s and Professor Tyndall’s ‘inscrutable power,’ and Professor Tyndall’s claim that they encouraged religion; to which Dr. Brown replied that their inscrutable power was not even a God, and that a religion of emotion, without any foundation in the intellect, was unreal and impossible. Then he criticised Mr. W. Rathbone Greg’s books—*The Creed of Christendom* and *The Enigmas of Life*—finding nothing very stable in the views of a man who thought it natural for one to believe everything at thirty, and renounce all religious belief at sixty. He finds Mr. Greg successfully criticised on this point by Dr. Newman’s brother, Professor F. W. Newman, and especially in his claim to believe in God, yet not necessarily a personal God. If God be only a probable God, true worship is impossible. Professor Newman also demolishes Mr. Greg’s position in regard to Christ—great admiration for Him as a man, yet denying Him all right to be more. Then he shows his inconsistency, inasmuch as Christ obviously claimed to be the Eternal Son of God. At this point Professor Newman comes out logically, but most offensively; for, in opposition to Greg, he condemns Christ as arrogant and intolerant, nay, as guilty of conscious and wilful imposture.

He impales Dr. James Martineau on the horn of the same dilemma. Mr. Newman is so far consistent; Mr. Greg and Mr. Martineau are in an insoluble problem as to Christ, and contradict themselves. A concluding reference is made by Dr. Brown to John Stuart Mill. Even on Theism, with his leanings to Manichæism, Mr. Mill was as helpless as any.

‘THE ORATORY, *Jan. 14, 1875.*

‘MY DEAR DR. BROWN,—I should have acknowledged your letter, with its inclosures and your newspaper, before this, had I not been so busy with my pamphlet, which is this day published. In that pamphlet, if it comes your way, there will be much, I know, in which you will not agree. The more pleasant then it is to turn to the subject of your letter and lecture, in which I did not observe, or do not recollect, even a word in which I do not follow, or rather cordially second you.

‘It is indeed to me strange that, being, as the world would say, at your Antipodes, still in those all-important points about which you write I should be one with you; and I rejoice in it as one compensation of the cruel overthrow of faith which we see on all sides of us, that, as the setting of the sun brings out the stars, so great principles are found to shine out, which are hailed by men of various religions as their own in common when infidelity prevails.

‘It rejoices me to find you insisting that emotions cannot stand of themselves, but presuppose an object; also that no man can worship, love, or trust in a probable God; also, as you seem to argue in the case of Dr. Martineau, that we cannot cut off half of Scripture, and believe the other half, where it is only the chance of our personal criticism taking this or that direction that has left that other half standing. And your argument against

him, as brought out in your letter, seems to me very strong, nor does he attempt to answer it in his.

‘I am sure your lecture must have been very effective, and do not at all wonder that the reporter should have to speak of outbursts of applause which accompanied its delivery.—I am, my dear Dr. Brown, very truly yours,

‘JOHN H. NEWMAN.

‘The Rev. David Brown, D.D., etc. etc.’

In 1877 Dr. Brown proposed to call on Dr. Newman. He received a most courteous reply, with an offer, if it should save his time, that Dr. Newman would call on him at his hotel. Dr. Brown, however, preferred going to the Oratory. He used to tell his friends how much he was struck with the plainness of his room, which was furnished in the simplest way. Dr. Newman, in a subsequent letter, acknowledged the kindness that prompted his visit, and seemed much gratified by it.

In 1878 Dr. Brown took a bolder step, pointing out to Dr. Newman certain matters of historical fact that seemed to controvert the position he had adopted in the *Apologia*. He must have awaited his reply with something of that trepidation which one feels when one considers that offence may have been taken, leading to an unpleasant reply. If so, the result must have been a most gratifying surprise. So far from being offended, Dr. Newman is grateful for his kindness, and pays a high compliment to the Free Church:—

‘THE ORATORY, April 23, 1878.

‘MY DEAR DR. BROWN,—Thank you for your kind and most interesting letter. You need not say you do not write in a controversial spirit. I know you don’t, and I

am too old and too tired for controversy. I grieve if I have said in print one word unnecessarily to pain you or any other good man and zealous Christian; and I am keenly pierced, as I don't doubt you are too, whenever I think of our most unhappy divisions.

'You will find my passage in question at pp. 76, 77, of edition 1, and at pp. 188, 189, in my new edition.

'As far as I have said what cannot be sufficiently supported by facts, of course I must bear the responsibility of such inaccuracy. Here I will but thank you for the very full account you give of historical difficulties which lie, as you consider, in my way. This I shall study at my leisure, and that the rather because I am sorry to say my eyes are too wearied to do justice always to your writing, which to them is difficult.

'However, I will say at once, because I doubt whether you are aware of it, that I have always looked at the Free Kirk of Scotland with admiration. I consider the movement to come from God, and to be a portion of that religious revival with which He has been, and is, visiting Western Christendom, in connection with that contemporaneous burst of infidelity which comes from the enemy of Truth; and I think that whatever success the Free Kirk has in its substance, comes from the truth that is in it. And with this avowal I close this letter, wishing you the best blessings from above in association with this sacred and joyful season.—Most truly yours,

'JOHN H. NEWMAN.'

About this time the Robertson Smith case was exciting great attention, and Dr. Brown sent Dr. Newman an account of it from his point of view.

'THE ORATORY, *July 22, 1878.*

'MY DEAR DR. BROWN,—I thank you very much for your account of the painfully interesting proceedings in

which you have been engaged, and think it very kind in you to have taken the trouble to write it.

‘I have ever entertained a great respect for the persons and the aims, as far as I knew them, of the leaders of the Free Church in Scotland, and I shall rejoice to hear that you have succeeded in your efforts against the Liberalism of the day.

‘You must have had a fatiguing time in London, if the heat was there as it was here last week; and, generally speaking, when it is hot in London, it is very oppressively so.—Most truly yours,

JOHN H. NEWMAN.’

In 1882, Dr. Brown paid another visit to Dr. Newman, now a Cardinal; and in reference to it, Cardinal Newman wrote:—

‘I have ever been touched with your kind regard for me since you first called here, and have felt much gratified; and I pray that God may reward you abundantly for your goodness, and bring you to His eternal kingdom.—Yours with much affection,

‘J. H. Card. NEWMAN.’

The last letter of this series appears to bear on a critique of Dr. Brown’s on an address of Dr. Martineau to his former students (see after, page 250).

‘THE ORATORY, *June 21, 1882.*

‘MY DEAR DR. BROWN,—I have read with much interest your clear and vigorous, rather I should say, your powerful statement: of course, it has shocked me much. Not that I did not know substantially the dreadful facts which it details, but I was not aware of the eloquence and force which were at the command of the writers to whom they

related. The passage about the "infinite sea and the silent stars" is as dreadful as it is beautiful.

'As to your notice of my brother, it was simple news to me, and is horrible.

'Gibbon's famous sentence is more than justified, "The predictions of the Catholics are accomplished; the web of mystery is unravelled," etc.

'And so in your last sentence you come of necessity and as a duty to faith! Most true; so, from the house-tops, said Catholics, when Protestantism began.—Most truly yours,

J. H. Card. NEWMAN.'

CHAPTER XVI

CORRESPONDENCE ON PUBLIC QUESTIONS
WITH DR. MARTINEAU AND OTHERS

IN the same spirit in which Dr. Brown had entered into correspondence with Dr. Newman, at the one extreme of the theological and ecclesiastical position, he became the correspondent of Dr. James Martineau, not far from the other. In dealing with this incident of his life, the biographer is in a tantalising difficulty; for though a few letters on both sides have been preserved, they are like unmatched gloves, and all his ingenuity fails to make them fit. Happily, however, the letter which we subjoin at the outset stands independently of the rest; and coming from a man whose years are not much fewer than were Dr. Brown's, and from whom he differed so widely on the most vital subjects, its tender, loving, pathetic tone will be sure to excite the profound interest of our readers. It is in reply to a letter from Miss Brown, written after her father's death, in which she asked him for any letters of his which he might happen to have kept.

'35 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.

'Dec. 2, 1897.

'DEAR MISS BROWN,—The warm affection which drew me to your excellent father and made me rever-

ently ponder his experience and counsels, and even try to think as he did, led me also to keep his letters long after I had responded to their first impression. I expected, therefore, on receiving your application, to send you a parcel considerably larger than that which I now forward, and less recent. But it seems that those of earlier date than 1891 have not been preserved; partly, I believe, because they contained matter more or less confidential, or affecting other people than ourselves. I send you, however, the four that remain; which, I think you will say, delightfully exemplify the loving relation which may persist through all the threatened alienations of incompatible theologies. This is a mere matter of course with me, to whom involuntary heresy is but an infirmity and not a sin. But it is a genuine stretch of charity in one who, like your father, deems salvation itself conditional on orthodox belief. That he could show such grace and patience towards me in my wanderings from his standards touched me very deeply; though, as a mode of *thought*, it naturally bore to me the aspect of a blessed inconsistency. With few exceptions, the best men I have known have been among those who have *loved and lived* better than they *thought*.

‘I shall watch with great interest for the appearance of the Memoir, if I am still here to read it. But “friend after friend departs.” F. W. Newman has passed into the silences, and speaks to me only in his books. R. H. Hutton, my most beloved of pupils—never more beloved than when he found a better teacher—has escaped to a less pathetic life. I more and more am conscious of being but a lingerer here.

Yet, as spectator, if not as actor, I retain unabated my interest in the scene; and my faith, deepening every day, that "the former things were" *not* "better than these."—I remain, dear Miss Brown, yours very truly,
'JAMES MARTINEAU.'

The first subject of general interest on which any letters remain bears on the memorable address of Dr. Martineau, delivered on 23rd June 1881, in Portland Street Chapel, London, to students in Manchester College from 1840 to 1880. It is entitled 'Loss and Gain in Recent Theology,' and at the time it greatly disappointed many of Dr. Martineau's friends, who had fondly hoped to find that he had gained more and lost less during the term of forty years over which his survey extended. On this address Dr. Brown wrote a vigorous and powerful critique in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. His candour and his kindness were stretched to their furthest limit; for he was not a man to conceal or to compromise his views, nor yet to utter a word that would unnecessarily have excited painful feeling, or severed the bond of friendship. Indeed, it was one of the most remarkable features of Dr. Brown's mind that in dealing with men of opposite views he was able so thoroughly to 'speak the truth in love,'—at least while he could exercise the self-control of the study, whatever warmth he may sometimes have shown under the exasperating conditions of public oral controversy. Dr. Martineau's reply to his criticism was as follows:—

‘THE POLCHAR, ROTHIERMURCHUS,
‘AVIEMORE, Oct. 25, 1883.

‘MY DEAR DR. BROWN,—You need not have hesitated to send me your critique on my Address of 1881; for though by nature I crave for sympathy and suffer much from the censure of those whom I respect and love, yet experience has taught me to reverence *their* sense of truth no less than to obey my own. So strong do I feel the presumption to be against my own judgment when it conflicts with that of one to whom I look up, that I should only too easily surrender it if it had but one resistance to encounter; but when you tilt at me on one side, and Frank Newman on the other, I hold my ground, not of my own strength, but from the equilibrium of your opposite onsets. Having once occupied your point of view, I see plainly that our difficulty in coming to an understanding arises from the facts that our differences do not lie, like stations in perspective, upon the same line of distance, along which we may travel further or less far; but are rather like properties of dissimilar curves, whose equations need different symbols, and admit of no exact comparison. I cannot, in consequence, accept as correct what you intend to be a faithful report of the positions which I lay down, *e.g.*, “that all *revealed religion*” is to be “renounced”; and that Christ is “*only a mere man*”; and that “the ideal Christ” whom we retain is “a figure of our own creation,” obtained by applying a “very fine faculty,” or “instinctive sense of credibility,” which picks and chooses, cuts and carves *ad libitum*. I believe in none but “revealed religion”: I believe it impossible for a “mere man” (whatever that may be) to be a revealer of religion; and the figure of the historical Christ is, for me, disengaged from the unhistorical elements of the Gospel narratives by a legitimate application of the critical prin-

ciples to which all analogous literature is amenable. "External authority" is, to me, a contradiction in terms, as "supernatural authority" is a tautology: and to identify the "miraculous" with "supernatural" seems to me to confound the realms of Law and Spirit—the ignorance of law with the knowledge of spirit. The whole relation of God to both Man and Nature is thus differently conceived at the outset by us, and so our logical and historical thought and expression are cast into different moulds; not, however, as I trust, without provision in either case for access of heart and will to the Divine Love and Holiness.

'As for the *Messianic Doctrine*, the rejection of it is by no means new. When I was studying at York under my venerable theological tutor, Mr. Wellbeloved, he told us, at a certain stage of his course on the "Evidences of Christianity," that here it was usual to introduce the argument from Prophecy; but that he must omit it, for reasons which would appear in the course of the Hebrew and Old Testament reading. He would then justify his doubts whether the prophets ever foretold the coming of Christ, or treated of other than contemporary matters and the conditional issues of the Divine Government. This was sixty years ago, and expressed the opinion which he had held all his active life, and received from his predecessor, Mr. Cappa.

'In my remark about τοῦ πονηροῦ, I remember that I omitted a necessary qualification. Any neuter Greek adjective may be used, with the article, to denote the abstract quality, *in the Nominative and Accusative*: the limitation to certain adjectives which I mentioned refers only to the employment of *oblique cases* as abstract nouns.

'We are on the point of starting this morning on our journey to town; and I fear my letter must betray the

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confusion of a dismantled house and a reluctant traveller.
—Believe me, always, yours most cordially,

‘JAMES MARTINEAU.’

The following does not appear to have been Dr. Brown’s immediate reply to this letter, but it shows the spirit in which he wrote to his friend :—

‘104 CROWN STREET,
‘ABERDEEN, March 10, 1892.

‘MY DEAR DR. MARTINEAU,—Your letter is like yourself, all that has drawn me to you ever since I knew you. Yes, dear friend, our Father in heaven sees to the bottom of your heart and mine alike; and I know right well that you are as ready as I am to say, and, I suppose, do say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” We have great difficulty in knowing how far our search after truth and determination to follow it wherever it leads us is unconsciously influenced by our antecedents, our upbringing, and all our environments. A clerical brother, already distinguished in literature as a thinker and preacher, who was present at a select conference of ministers to consider how best to deepen their spirituality and usefulness in the ministry of the Gospel, said that one of his failures was not going deep enough down into *the subsoil of his conscience*. We say we are conscientious, and want to act entirely as such, and afterwards have reason to believe that on several occasions *other considerations* unconsciously weighed with us in the decisions we came to. Well, our comfort is

that "He knoweth our frame," and in His hands we may safely leave one another.

'In fact, the only thing that has ever made me wish that you could see things as I now do (for I also once saw them nearly as you now do) is that I experience sources of gratitude and songs of praise which you cannot know, because, believing as I do, I can sing, "Unto Him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood," etc. Yes, but again I say, you are in better hands than mine. So, beloved friend, let us, like Newman, say, "Lead, kindly Light."—Yours ever,

'DAVID BROWN.'

The latest of Dr. Brown's letters to Dr. Martineau shows with what a tender yearning heart he was ever thinking of him :—

'104 CROWN STREET,
'ABERDEEN, Friday, Feb. 9, 1894.

'MY DEAR DR. MARTINEAU,—Things every now and then recall you to me, and I write to ask how you keep your health. I think you are two or three years younger than I am. I am now half through my ninety-first year, yet am able to go about; and though I cannot *read* the biggest print, and must have all read to me that has to be read, I can *write*, as you see, though not always very legibly. I write an occasional article when I have anything to say; and in the *Thinker*, for the first time, I write in November and December '93, and February '94, three papers on a subject to which I have given special attention for nearly thirty years—the textual criticism of the New Testament, a subject of much complexity and difficulty. In the New Testament

Company of Revisers, out of twenty-five or twenty-seven members, not more than four or five were competent to vote on conflicting readings; and only when the question was discussed on both sides could they vote, and did so very much as they relied on the opposed parties. My papers don't go beyond the one thing they propose. I think of reprinting them as my legacy on this subject, in a small quarto form, at a shilling or so.

'Kindly tell me how you are, what you are about, and give my kind regards to your dear daughter.

'My daughter joins me in warm regards; and I am, my very dear friend, yours sincerely,

'DAVID BROWN.'

Dr. Brown corresponded in an equally friendly way with the Rev. A. Gordon, now of Manchester, who writes: 'To his valuable and most kindly correspondence in more recent years I am under great personal obligation, and shall ever cherish his memory with solemn and grateful thoughts.' Dr. Brown earnestly sought to draw him to his own views on the person of Christ, and to impress him with the downward tendency of Unitarianism, which, even in the case of a man like Dr. Martineau, had been always taking away and never giving. In replying, Mr. Gordon, however, placed the person of 'our Lord' in an intermediate category, holding Him neither to possess supreme deity, nor to be merely a creature, but 'begotten of the divine essence, *φῶς ἐκ φωτός*'; and, 'in the original sense of the term,' he was 'quite ready to confess Him with the Nicæan Creed to be *θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ*.' The ascription

of a downward tendency to Unitarianism, Mr. Gordon held to be a parallel charge to that which Roman Catholicism brought against Protestantism. Dr. Brown was greatly pleased to argue with an opponent so fair and reasonable as Mr. Gordon, and so manifestly bent on arriving at truth; while he felt deeply that his intermediate view of the person of Christ was alike difficult to prove and to understand, and deprived Him of the highest of those glorious qualities which entitled Him in every sense to the name of Saviour.

It was natural that Dr. Brown should have no little correspondence in connection with the Revision, and his view of the text in opposition to Westcott and Hort. Among those with whom he thus exchanged views was Professor Warfield, at first of the Western Theological Seminary, Alleghany, afterwards of Princeton. Dr. Warfield's letters to Dr. Brown (which have been preserved—a great compliment to the writer!) are full of cordiality, but not always of cordial agreement. In fact, Dr. Warfield avows himself a follower of Hort. Writing, 27th February 1886, he says:—

‘I need not say that I have read the papers you sent me with care and with profit. I quite agree with you that the tone and manner of Canon Cook's book is far from what it should be; and I should doubtless go further than you could feel yourself justified in, in my disagreements with his specific conclusions. For (why should I hesitate frankly to avow it?) I am a convert of Dr. Hort's. In my teaching year by year, my brighter students had annually puzzled me with inquiries after some method of textual criticism which proceeded

upwards from the facts by such gradual and steady steps that the conclusions might be trusted as scientifically accurate. Each year I was forced to feel more and more deeply that such a method was not in our hands. Dr. Hort has, in my judgment, for the first time supplied it to us. I go to my classroom now with lightened heart. I simply say to the students, "Use your common sense." . . . Your method of criticism appears to me—may I not speak frankly?—to result in dominating external evidence without internal evidence.'

Unfortunately, Dr. Brown's reply to this has not been preserved, but it would certainly repudiate the extreme tendency with which his friend charged him. On other subjects they agreed more thoroughly. The following year (21st July 1887) Dr. Warfield writes:—

'In the meantime, much has occurred that I would like to talk about. Among other things, I see the controversy on the Advent of Christ begun in the *British Weekly*, in which I am impatiently awaiting the sight of your article. The Pre-millenarian serpent was scotched, not killed, by your book many years ago. As to the Book of Revelation, I believe that it has been prevailingly misunderstood on both sides of the controversy. The Commentary and Baird Lectures of Dr. Milligan express my own views as to that book more nearly than any other publications with which I am acquainted. [This, however, was not Dr. Brown's view. See chap. xix., 'Later Writings—Structure of the Apocalypse.'] Leaving the Apocalypse to one side for the moment, I cannot help seeing that the more didactic

portions of the New Testament set the matter beyond all appeal, at least so far as this, namely, that Christ's Advent introduces the END of the world, and the *final* consummation and *last* judgment, and not another worldly dispensation of any kind.'

A little later he writes (31st August 1887):—

'I wish you would write the outline study of the Apocalypse, of which you speak as having often been in your thoughts to give us. Certainly it is a dimly lighted territory in which one walks when he dares enter into the precincts of that noble but obscure book. . . . It was with very great satisfaction that I read your contribution to the Millenarian discussion in the *British Weekly*. I am sure you will permit me the liberty of saying that what you said in your first article I consider the fit word fitly spoken. No sophistry can really cloud the testimonies you there bring forward, which, moreover, you have presented in the most telling way. I regret that Professor Beet has allowed himself in his second paper to hint at the "untrustworthiness of the authorship of the Apocalypse." . . . Certainly no book appears to have more decided testimony, from Irenæus back to Papias, or at least Justin, in its favour. . . . Certainly Nicoll is an admirable editor, only I suspect him of writing all his paper, and no editor can stand that long.'

Among those to whom Dr. Brown sent one of his papers on the Revision was Professor W. Salmon, D.D., of Trinity College, Dublin. He received the following reply:—

‘DUBLIN T. C., Oct. 17, 1885.

‘DEAR DR. BROWN,—I have just glanced at your interesting tract, and mean to give it a more careful reading, with a view to my lectures this term. But it seems to me that Westcott and Hort use the Roman Catholic method.

The Roman Catholics allow you to use your human reason in order to find out the true church; but after you have found it, you must crush down every doubt as sinful. Westcott and Hort allow the use of subjective criticism in the first instance in order to test whether authorities are trustworthy. Having found B right in a number of cases, they ingeniously find reasons for submitting to it even where mere human reason would pronounce it wrong. Acts xii. is clearly such a case. I had a theory about that text, but it has gone to a far back corner in my mind, and I cannot now recall it. Surely, if “Charity seeketh not her own” is right, the transcriber has improved upon St. Paul.

‘And so likewise of “One thing is needful.”

‘The flaw, then, of Westcott and Hort’s method is, that it may be reversed. We might as well point out a number of passages where B is clearly wrong, and say, “This authority is never to be trusted.” I have just got as far as “No Popery.” I look on Burgon and Hort as in this both Papists. But when I try to use my own understanding, it is so wretchedly weak, that if I had but the remedy of putting the subject from my thoughts I would be glad to fly to a Pope again.—I remain, very sincerely yours,

W. SALMON.

‘We were excessively sorry to lose Dr. Macalister for Dublin.’

One of Dr. Brown's most intimate correspondents was Principal Moule, of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. With him, too, he comes again and again on the Revision work. Sometimes he propounds his views, and sometimes he gives a morsel or two of harmless gossip. Referring to Dr. Moule's lectures on Ephesians (July 24, 1894), he says:—

‘Ephesians is a subject in which you are thoroughly at home. Bishop Lightfoot told me at Bishop Auckland that it was the Epistle he would try next. I said I could guess that he would take that after Colossians. “Yes, but——”—“I know what that *but* means. You haven't your students, as at Cambridge, to listen to your lectures on the Epistle.”—“That's it,” he said. “I'm trying to get three or four to lecture to here, but it wants the stimulus of about a hundred sitting with pens in hand to hear me.” You know the loss; the book never appeared. He was a real Christian, and I believe walked with God. By the bye, about Dean Alford and the Revision Company. It was delightful work. Sometimes there were little jokes. Thus, when we came to the resurrection of Lazarus and the opening of the grave, “Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days,” the question was, Should we change that ugly word? There was a pause to think whether we should. I said, “What would you say to an American Baptist translation, ‘By this time he is offensive’?” A burst of laughter followed. But I was struck with this, that when we came to Gethsemane and the Agony, as we approached this tender section, there was a dead silence, and everything said, as we proceeded from verse

to verse, was said in a kind of whisper. Such scenes would be worth recording, though I will not meddle with it. One thing you would like to know. When we came to Rom. vi. 5, Dr. Kennedy, at the feet of whose Greek and Latin grammars hundreds of English clergy had sat when he was Professor, said, "I thoroughly believe in the Divinity of Christ, yet I don't think the Apostle anywhere calls Christ in marked terms God."—"Well, how would you punctuate and translate the verse?"—"In one of two ways," he said; "but I know," he said, "you will not agree with me, for theology stands in your way." Some of us felt this to be an unjust charge; and the Dean of Rochester, Dr. Scott of *Liddell and Scott's Lexicon*, a very fine and most excellent man, said, "No, sir, we stand upon Greek. The verse won't translate but, as in the Authorised Version, according to the Septuagint and New Testament Greek." Well, we prevailed so far that the other punctuation and translation was not inserted in the margin as an alternative reading.'

Among other subjects introduced in correspondence with Dr. Moule, *à propos* the Epistle to the Ephesians, was 'the Keswick teaching.' Substantially Dr. Brown's view was, that the power to sanctify believers *wholly* is working in them; but through that remaining unbelief of which they never get wholly free, it does not work out its possible effects. Under date July 26, 1894, he writes:—

'I had a call the other evening from a United Presbyterian minister, who, in conversation, asked me what I thought of the "Higher Christian life and sancti-

fication by faith.”—“Do you mean what is called the Keswick teaching?”—“Yes.”—“Well, I don’t like these words, but I know what you mean, and I will answer you. If you will not only read, but study and weigh every clause of the Apostle’s prayer in Eph. iii. 14-21, you will find what more than justifies all that goes by the name you employ. It is the longest of the prayers offered for the church he wrote to. After reading carefully over this prayer, asking for them what they might think it impossible for them to reach up to, he closes with these words, ‘Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us*, unto Him be glory in the church.’ So there is a power actually working in us, the power of Him who is able to do far beyond what we dare to ask or even conceive, the power working in us, sufficient to achieve all the possibilities of sanctification. But to do this we need not merely to believe all this, but to realise our actual possession of it. For we know too well that hundreds of Christians do believe what, when they pray, they do not actually feel that they believe. The Apostle Peter was to be brought forth for execution by Herod Agrippa I. immediately after the seven days of unleavened bread were over, and the disciples had been praying for his deliverance all the seven days, and the last night they held an all-night prayer meeting. But when Peter, miraculously delivered, came to the door of Mary and spoke, the girl who came to the door ran back and said, ‘It’s Peter!’—‘Thou art mad.’ She went again, and insisted it was he. ‘Then it must be his angel’—anything but himself. Yet this

was what they had been praying for, and for the last few hours pleading for. Alas for poor human nature even in believers ! ”

Again, when writing on this subject (April 1892) to his friend Mr. M'Laren, he said :—

‘ As to Keswick, I believe the essence of its teaching lies in this, that in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and that we are complete in Him, having all the *furniture* for holiness. And to realise this in ourselves and in our preaching is what they aim at. They think it is natural to say that not till recently did they themselves realise it. I refer to Mr. Moule of Cambridge, who at the Aberdeen Convention told his own experience before and since he realised it. The work of the Spirit is to take all these truths, and by His indwelling in believers to enable them to experience them in themselves. And as to sinlessness in believers, they repudiate it, asserting only that *according to our faith* so is it with us actually, as to all the possibilities of a holy life. As to M'Cheyne, it is useless asking whether he and the Christians of his type were less advanced than those who hold with Keswick. Every age has its own way of looking at Divine truth and expressing itself, and it is the wisdom of Christians to find the same precious truth recognised alike by those who feel and express themselves differently.’

Dr. Brown had a great regard for the Rev. Frank H. White, although not agreeing with him in all things. He was greatly pleased with his reply to Professor Drummond, believing that with all his excellence and

Christian influence Drummond failed in giving to the doctrine of the Atonement that central, ever vital, and highest place which was due to it, and which could neither be dispensed with nor regarded as secondary. He agreed with Mr. White too in certain views on the Apocalypse, and particularly in his opposition to what was called 'the secret Rapture' doctrine, and the alleged separation of the ready from the unready, left for some years behind for purification by the tribulation of the last days. 'You write to my heart's content about "they that are Christ's at His coming" as including all the saints. I am entirely pleased with your urging that in questions of this nature we should not be guided by passages in the Apocalypse alone,—which, as I have repeatedly said in my book on the *Second Advent*, is to explain the clear by the dark,—but by plain, pointed statements when the truth under consideration is treated.'

In one of his letters to Mr. White he gives an interesting anecdote of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, to whom he sent his book on the *Second Advent*. It refers to the motto from Augustine on the title-page: 'Qua propter, qui dicit Dominum citius esse venturum optabilius loquitur sed periculosius fallitur. Utinam ergo sit verum; quia erit molestum si non verum. Qui autem dicit Dominum tardius esse venturum et tamen credit, sperat, amat ejus adventum, profecto tarditate ejus etiamsi fallitur, feliciter fallitur. Habebit enim majorem patientiam si hoc ita erit; majorem lætitiā si non erit. Ac per hoc ab eis qui diligunt manifestationem Domini, ille auditur suavius, isti creditur tutius.'

‘When I wrote my book on the *Second Advent* I sent a copy to dear Edward Bickersteth. He answered me from his bed, for he had been overturned in his carriage, from the effects of which I think he never recovered. After praising the spirit in which I had written, he said the one thing in the contents he envied was the motto on the title-page. It was an extract of a letter of St. Augustine to another bishop who was a Pre-millenarian, which Augustine was not. The Latin may be given freely in English, thus: “If *you* are right, *I* am delightfully wrong. But if *I* am right, *you* are wofully wrong.” They both loved the Lord, and loved His appearing. So, if his brother was right, Augustine would have the joy of seeing Him much sooner than he expected; but if Augustine was right, his brother would not see Him till long after he expected. Well, that is my position.’

On the supreme importance of the doctrine of propitiation in the Christian system, Dr. Brown was extremely strong. Referring in a letter to his friend Mr. David M'Laren to an address by Mr. Bachelor on Rationalism in the Free Churches, he says: ‘Bachelor’s position is the one in which I mean to live and die—the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord’s death as the central article of Christianity—not the Incarnation.’ It was not merely that he set the highest possible value on that doctrine in itself; but he had found, as a matter of fact, that whenever it was given up or undervalued, that was the first step in a downward course, which terminated in Unitarianism. And as he found that some conspicuous Broad churchmen

undervalued the Atonement—and from this charge he could not exempt one whom otherwise he valued very highly, Principal Fairbairn of Mansfield College—he was extremely anxious as to the future of that movement. It was matter of great regret to him that some of the more intellectual young ministers of his own church did not proclaim the Atonement with that clear ring which he always desiderated. This would have filled him with apprehension as to the future of the Free Church, were it not that so many were offering themselves for missionary service. We were not all on the down grade. In like manner, Dr. Brown was very apprehensive as to the application of the doctrine of the *κένωσις*, or self-emptying of Christ, that was made by some; for it went to deprive Him of authority in explaining the Old Testament—a conclusion which he could not bear.

Accordingly, as he got older, Broad churchism and the Higher Criticism came to be more and more disliked. Writing to his friend Mr. M'Laren (August 10, 1890), he says:—

‘Stanley Leathes has written a smart paper on the new reading of the Old Testament by our Higher Critics in the August *Theological Monthly* (Nisbet’s successor to the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*). I foresaw where it would land them in denying our Lord’s authority as an interpreter of the Old Testament. Such a kenosis would leave us an empty enough humanity. I should like to ask those reverential students, whether, if the only way in which a suffering Messiah could be found in the Old Testament was their roundabout and very in-

direct way of getting Him in,—whether He would have been warranted to put down the two on their way to Emmaus as a pair of stupids! For 'Ὁ 'Ανόητοι is not “O fools” nor “foolish men,” but “O Stupids,” if we could use such a jibe, or “O silly ones,” meaning, Where have your eyes been that ye could not see what stared you in the face? Would any one with the new exegesis see, in the Old Testament, what Christ showed them, when He made their hearts burn within them, by showing that His actual sufferings, and out of them the glory emerging, were all written in their own Scriptures?’

We have seen (page 239) how much interested Dr. Brown was in natural science in its relation to religion. Unfortunately, his friend Henry Drummond, while exemplifying personally, and in a most beautiful way, the union of strong personal faith and enthusiastic love of science, did not take the method of harmonising them which satisfied Dr. Brown. Late in the day another Scottish name came into prominence, which interested him greatly, that of Mr. Romanes, known by his *nom de plume* as Physicus. In an address to the Evangelical Alliance at Ryde in September 1886, Dr. Brown had referred to the sad confession of ‘Physicus,’ that with the denial of a God, ‘the universe had lost all its loveliness.’ It was a great joy to find subsequently that ‘Physicus’ had returned to the faith. One of the last letters he wrote with his own hand (February 10, 1897), addressed to his friend Mr. David McLaren, announces his satisfaction at this change of views:—

‘So “Physicus” is Mr. Romanes. His *Life* by his widow was out of print. But a new and cheaper edition has been printed. I have ordered it, but have not yet got it. Pity he did not announce his change of views himself. But one is thankful for the change.’

He announces his purpose of writing his friend on the subject of the conversion of Colonel Gardiner, which had been denounced as a ‘false miracle.’ ‘It was no miracle,’ he says, ‘like those of Christ, but one of those miracles of grace which are as real.’

But the irregular sprawling characters in which this letter was written, almost literally in the dark, showed that his days of letter-writing were now drawing to a close; the night was at hand.

Dr. Brown carried on a somewhat extensive correspondence with friends in the United States, particularly Dr. Lowry of Philadelphia and Dr. Moore of Pittsburg. This correspondence has come too late into the hands of the biographer to be made full use of in this Memoir. The topics on which it bears are chiefly those of which ample notice has been taken in the preceding narrative. For the writers he shows a very high esteem, and their views on the exegetical questions which they discuss are received with great interest and deference. He had conceived a strong personal attachment for the writers, separated though they were by the great ocean, but, at the same time, one in all that they most loved and valued.

CHAPTER XVII

CORRESPONDENCE WITH PERSONAL FRIENDS

DR. BROWN had the rare knack of very speedily turning business correspondents into personal friends, and establishing lasting relations with them that drew out the warm affections of his heart. But even towards them the fulness of his affection did not show itself as it did to those with whom he was accustomed to hold personal and congenial intercourse. To give our narrative such measure of completeness as the scanty materials at our command will allow, it is necessary that we give at least a sample or two of his letters to personal friends. In no circumstances did his heart warm to them as in times of bereavement. Of that he had had experience personally, and as a pastor he had often had to deal with it. Early in his own married life he had lost an infant son, and later, as we have seen, his heart had been lacerated to the core by the premature death of his eldest son. Twenty years before his own death he was parted from her whom he loved as his own soul (see chap. xxi.); and afterwards he lost a married daughter and her husband in a distant part of the world. Many a prayer he offered for friends in trouble. When his prayers were asked for a friend, he made a point of offering at least one full, specific

prayer on behalf of the person in question, lest, when mixed with many others, the case might escape individual recollection. The first letter, of which we insert a portion, was addressed to his sister, Mrs. Murray,¹ wife of the Rev. John Murray of Aberdeen (uncle of Rev. Andrew Murray of Wellington, Cape Colony), on occasion of the death of a little girl. It is dated February 3, 1845.

‘MY DEAR SISTER. . . . But O what consolation have you in the evidence which she seems to have afforded, even when delirious, that she was one of Christ’s lambs! . . . To be the instrument of inserting one jewel in the Redeemer’s crown, O what an honour! We believe this, but scarcely realise it, for sense sadly overpowers faith. But in eternity the redeemed shall wonder at the dimness with which they saw it, and the struggle it cost them here even to believe it. We are “lying among the pots” here, and grace gets blackened and marred, though it be grace still.’

He proceeds to tell her how the little girl’s case had been useful in a similar case in his own congregation in Glasgow, where he had told about his niece; and how gratified he had been when the mother, who had not previously shown much apparent religious interest, had said with reference to her own sick babes, ‘I could give them up if I were but sure about their souls.’ It was often useful to tell persons in affliction of similar trials. Often, he added, we think there is no

¹ Mrs. Murray was his eldest sister, a lady of many gifts and high character. Her musical talent was really genius. In after years, when at any time Dr. Brown had been specially touched by the singing of a hymn in the meeting in the Marywell Street School, he would rush to his sister’s house, full of enthusiasm, and sing it with her, feeling how much its beauty would be enhanced by its being handled by her.

sorrow like our sorrow, and it is good for us to learn that 'the same afflictions are accomplished in our brethren which are in the world.'

The next letter is addressed to a member of a family with whom he had most friendly relations—that of the Countess Dowager of Kintore. It was written on occasion of the lamented death of the Honourable Ian Keith-Falconer, her youngest son, just after he had entered on the work for which he had offered himself to the Free Church of Scotland, that of missionary to the Mohammedans of Aden—a post for which he was eminently adapted, alike from his Christian earnestness and his knowledge of Arabic. Indeed his great skill in that language had already procured for him a chair as Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge :—

' 104 CROWN STREET, ABERDEEN,

' May 17, 1887.

' DEAR LADY KINTORE,—I cannot express the profound sorrow with which the tidings of your dear, distinguished son's death has overwhelmed me. Others will pour in upon you the same thing, but you know how *I* knew him from early life, and the first buddings of grace appeared in him. But we know where he has gone, and that a father will welcome him there (his earthly one I mean!). Another Father has done it, and that shuts our mouth. My thoughts often revert to you and dear old days.—With much love, yours, dear Lady Kintore,

' D. BROWN.

' Not knowing your own address, I send this through the Bevans. For *them* one feels much. D. B.'

The letter to Mrs. Brown Douglas that follows, in which personal gratitude mingles so strongly with

regretful love, is the more to be noted that in the Robertson Smith case Dr. Brown and Mr. Brown Douglas were on opposite sides. The absolute cordiality of their relations at the date of the letter is an illustration of the remarkable manner in which excited feelings settled down after that case came to an end. It was feared at one time that it might give birth to a new disruption, but only a short time elapsed ere nearly all traces of the storm passed away. It was allowed to be a case in which difference of opinion might reasonably be found :—

‘ KILCREGGAN, HELENSBURGH,

‘ Aug. 14, 1885.

‘ MY DEAR MRS. BROWN DOUGLAS,—Your son would receive my telegram despatched a few minutes ago, written with deep regret at the impossibility of my reaching Edinburgh in time for the funeral, the card of invitation having reached this from Aberdeen only at the moment when I wrote my telegram. Otherwise I should have come from any accessible distance for such a purpose.

‘ You will be receiving letters of deepest sympathy from so very many who valued and loved your dear husband, that were it not that no expressions of real feeling are thrown away on those who know their sincerity, I might have been tempted not to obtrude upon you at such a time. But I am sure you will regard what I now write as coming fresh and warm from my heart. And well it may ; for of all the friends whom it is my privilege to possess, there is not one whom I thought a more perfect model of all that I think valuable in life. I have often said to friends, and I think I once hinted to himself, that I never knew a family more beautifully brought up than his, and his eyes filled at the remark. Of course, you yourself, dear friend, were included in my remark. For personal

character, Christian bearing, love of all good men, interest in every Christian and philanthropic object, and liberality in promoting them, for attachment to his own church and services to it, and yet catholicity of spirit—to whom could one point as combining all these qualities in a greater—I was almost going to say in an equal degree—when the name of dear David Maclagan checked me. His citizenship and public spirit let others speak of.

‘When I was at the Commission the day before yesterday, Mr. Bain (Pitcaple) and I got together; and he made this remark to me, that he thought the last speech your husband had made was in the Moderator’s room, when, on Monday the 1st of June, he, in the presence of a number of gentlemen, the *élite* of the Free Church’s lay members, presented me with a munificent testimonial of their regard. “That speech,” said Mr. Bain, “was the most beautiful expression of the feelings which we all cherished I had ever heard.”

‘Dear friend, you *know* what I *would* say as a Christian as to *his* gain and your loss, and I leave you therefore to feel it all to the uttermost. But I will carry the matter along with you to Him who has now given you a new name (Psalm lxxviii. 5). My daughters unite with me in all I have said.—Yours in Christian sympathy,

‘DAVID BROWN.’

To his very special friend, Mr. David M‘Laren, he writes most sympathetically (April 22, 1891) in connection with an affliction of a different kind. Mr. M‘Laren’s son had been obliged to give up a ministerial charge in England owing to permanent loss of sight:—

‘On my return from Edinburgh to-day, where I have been for the last few days, my daughter read me (as she does all my letters) your most touching letter of the 19th.

And I cannot let a day pass without expressing my heartfelt sorrow in your sorrow. I did see your son at Redfern, and have a perfect recollection of his appearance. I knew also that he was a pastor in England, though not exactly where. But such intelligence as you give me (and I thank you for being so minute, without which one cannot realise the whole case) is more than ordinarily trying. It touches one to the quick.

‘Rest assured, beloved friend, you will have my heartfelt prayers to our tender Father, who knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” A beautiful remark on this occurs in a book, which I am sorry I parted with as a student when I was rather “hard up.” It is by John Brown, minister of Wamphray (who was banished or had to flee to Holland during the persecutions under the Charleses (I. and II.), and was there, for aught I remember, till the Revolution), a scholar, one of whose works was translated into Latin by Professor Leidekker. The book I refer to was written to cheer the persecuted Presbyterians of Scotland, and called *The Life of Faith in Times of Trial*. The remark is this: “Pity does nothing to remove, but only to soothe in suffering. But it is very sweet. Take the case of your child. He has burnt his finger and cries bitterly. You take him on your knee, you clasp him, you clap him, and you say with a pitying sound, ‘Wulla wean, wulla wean.’ Well, that removes no pain, but the crying dies away, for the soothing effect of this pity has lulled it into a sense of relief.” Well, dear friend, assure yourself that you have all that in *your* Father and my Father. And I will hold up your hands as best I can, and hope you will let me know how the case goes on.’

One other letter of sympathy we note—to a brother minister who had shared his own affliction in the loss of his son. His own experience comes vividly to mind:—

‘I was much interested by your kind letter. At such an age the death of that dear boy must have been very trying, especially as he gave hopes of getting over it at first. His cry of ‘mother’ once and again touches me, because the last words of my eldest son, who went out, after a brilliant career at the Glasgow University, and then at Oxford, as a civilian to India, and after passing in three Indian languages, and thus ready for up country promotion, hurried off home on sick leave by the long voyage; and having undergone an operation for abscess of the liver, which after twelve days proved fatal—his last words, dear boy, were, “Mama, mama!”—uttered to an Irish Roman Catholic soldier, who waited on him night and day, whom I went to Chatham to see, and who said it was the most touching scene he ever passed through. How nice your dear boy’s companions coming to the funeral! Such things draw out the keenest but finest feelings of our nature; and when refined and purified by higher views, O how good they are for us!—Yours affectionately,

D. BROWN.’

Our readers will remember the invaluable Christian service which the Rev. Joseph Scudder rendered to Alexander Brown on board ship during the few days before his death. The following letters from Mr. Scudder will be read with interest, owing to the sacred relations between him and the Brown family. It will be remembered how kind and sympathetic both Mr. and Mrs. Scudder had been in their affliction.

In the first letter he tells of the death of the first Mrs. Scudder, the lady who had been in the ship with Alexander Brown :—

‘ 34 VESEY ST., NEW YORK CITY,
‘ Feb. 11, 1871.

‘ Rev. Doctor and Mrs. David Brown.

‘ MY DEAR FRIENDS,—To-morrow will be a year since my darling wife left me for a better home. My only apology for not writing is, that for ten months I was not permitted to write, or read, or speak. My friends had to obey the physicians who had charge of my case. No one supposed that I could recover, as the attack was on the brain. I should gladly have joined Anna, but God seems to have something for me yet to do. As soon as our Foreign Board heard that I was permitted to speak, they offered me a secretaryship. This I have not accepted, but have engaged to work for them six months to make trial of my strength.

‘ I need not tell you that Anna died as she lived ; or rather, she did not die. For some days I had feared her disease would terminate fatally. I was induced to leave her, for the first time, on the night of the 11th February for a little sleep. Friends who promised to watch most carefully assured me there was no danger. Anna herself felt confident that there would be no change. As I kissed her good-night, she looked up with a smile and said, “He giveth His beloved sleep.” She closed her eyes and dropped into a sweet slumber. Her brother and I left her with the special request to be called if there were a change. About one in the morning of the 12th we were called, but she had gone to sleep, never to be disturbed by human voice. Our friends, two or three of whom had been watching closely, could not discover when she breathed her last. She did not speak after I left her.

‘ The past year, at least most of it, has been dark, very dark, but at last I can recognise the hand of a friend.

My wife, I know, was a great sufferer, not from severe pain, but from weakness. All the red particles of the blood seemed to have dried up. Yet she did not wish to die. I was quite ill at the time; and when I would express my fears that she could not last long, she would answer, "The Lord will not take me when He sees how much you need me."—"But, Anna, you should make preparation. Friends will desire to know what you thought in view of death."—"I have no preparation to make—that was done long ago." She would partly realise, and converse with her friends so happily, that at times I was made to think I was mistaken—Yours affectionately,

‘JOSEPH SCUDDER.’

Two years later a second letter came, recording, in the first place, a matrimonial romance, and in the second a most gratifying incident connected with *Crushed Hopes crowned in Death*. Owing to continued ill-health, Mr. Scudder had been obliged to give up India and accept a small charge in the Hudson Highlands:—

‘GLENHAM, DUTCHESS CO., N.Y.,

‘Jan. 25th, 1873.

‘MY DEAR DR. BROWN,—I am ashamed of my negligence, and deserve a good scolding. I might perhaps bring forward some excuses, not to exculpate, but extenuate, my fault. I will not, however, urge these. I plead guilty, and beg for pardon. Your dear letter came to me when I most needed it, and it has been read over and over again. Now your *Life of the late John Duncan, LL.D.*, proves that you have not forgotten me. I have not, dear friend, forgotten the sweet and blessed memories of the past; and I often think what happy times those whom we mutually loved on earth are enjoying together in the Father’s great Home.

‘But, I suppose, I must tell you something about myself. As I continued to be, though better, still an invalid, Anna’s family and mine both urged me to find a companion. And here is quite a piece of romance. Before I ever knew the Anna whom you knew, I was engaged to my present *Anna*. Her father would not permit his only daughter to go to India; and at the advice of Dr. Spencer, to whose church she belonged, we were obliged to give each other up. The American Board refused to send single men, and God gave me the precious jewel you saw I loved. As Anna DeWitt, a cousin of Rev. Dr. Thomas DeWitt, never chose to marry, to whom else should I look for one who would be willing to love and care for me? She cheerfully undertook the charge of the *poor invalid*, and has taken *pretty* good care of him ever since. . . .

‘So, you see, I have been settled as a pastor for a year. I cannot say I like the work as well as *that* of a missionary, yet I begin to love it more and more. Writing sermons in a new language (English) is not so hard a task as I feared it would be, and I am fast settling down to the idea that, after all, I was “foreordained” to be a country pastor.

‘The Evangelical Alliance is to meet this year. Can you not come, and dear Mrs. Brown too? No one on earth should have such a welcome. I am sure you would love this Anna, though she can never be to you what the other was.

‘Now let me tell you a word about the memoir of your son. While attending the funeral of a young man, about Alexander’s age, the most promising son of a brother clergyman of the Presbyterian denomination, a person stepped up and introduced himself: “I wish at some time to exchange with you,” he said, “for I have a lady who spends her summers in my congregation, and thinks that, next to the Bible, *Hopes crowned in Death* is the most

precious book she possesses. She wishes to see you." I shall, when opportunity offers, try to make her acquaintance. Accept plenty of thanks for *Life of J. Duncan*. His face is familiar. I must have seen him.

'And now, dear friend, may I ask for a continuance of affection and interest, and especially for your loving prayers that God would bless and prosper me in my comparatively new work.—Yours affectionately,

'JOSEPH SCUDDER.'

The next two letters, from the Rev. Dr. Gordon, Rector of Chetwynd, Salop, are inserted, partly as a cordial tribute to Dr. Brown himself, and partly for the testimony they bear to the very lofty spirituality and remarkable preaching power of his brother, Dr. Charles J. Brown. It has been matter of regret to the biographer that he has been unable, from want of documents, to convey an idea of the affectionate intimacy of the two brothers :—

'CHETWYND RECTORY, NEWPORT, SALOP,

'13th Nov. 1886.

'MY DEAR PRINCIPAL BROWN,—My hurried interview at Ryde with you called up many hallowed and sweet remembrances of the past. It was a matter of deep regret that I could not see more of you, but I was obliged to be off the next day to preach for my son-in-law, Lord Theobald Butler, in Hants. The day after I had a similar duty in Maidstone, Kent, and on the Friday also had to rush off to Staffordshire, where I arrived only in time to wash and go to the pulpit.

'Well do I remember you in Brighton Place, Potter Row, and afterwards in Forrest Road.

'Of all the men of every denomination that it has been

my privilege to know, none, for deep spirituality and subtle thought, equalled your sainted brother. I all but worshipped him; and if God has given me any success in my work for Him, mainly is it due to the early teaching I received at his lips.

‘If ever you come south again, pray take me in your travels, and refresh my soul with your rich experience and lore.

‘I am continually on the wing trying to do God’s work where He may open a door.

‘With highest Christian esteem and regard, I remain,
very cordially yours,
C. R. GORDON.’

‘CHETWYND RECTORY, NEWPORT, SALOP,
‘18th Nov. 1886.

‘MY DEAR PRINCIPAL,—What can I say to you for your elevating, helpful, and invaluable letter received to-day! It is indeed many a long day since its like reached me. Yes! the conviction has often forced itself upon my mind that there is a depth and power in educated Scotch piety that makes it stand unrivalled.

‘I must now tell you that I took the journey to Ryde almost entirely to meet you, and to recall many holy seasons of the past that never can be effaced from my memory.

‘Many years ago, when I was staying near Edinburgh with our cousins the Tytlers of Woodhouselee, I was then for a few weeks taking the duty for an old friend, Dean Ramsay. I begged off one Sunday in order that I might have confirmed the opinion as to the saintliness of your brother’s ministry. It proved to be his quarterly sacramental season, and he preached from the text, “What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?” It proved to be one of the holiest, ablest, and most helpful productions that I ever heard fall from the lips of a human being.

‘I do not hesitate to say that if any usefulness has been given to me for over thirty years, it was founded on the early teaching of your brother and men of like mind. In these early days I could have all but worshipped him. Then very precious were your own words at those occasional services, when you used to run through from Glasgow to help him.

‘For more than twenty-five years I have led a very bustling life. Doors seem to open in every quarter for the Master’s message, and with most gratifying results.

‘But I must not be egotistic, though desperately selfish, in wishing that you may come here some day, and that I may be honoured with your presence at my ain fireside. You may depend on it that the heartiest of Scotch welcomes awaits you, if that happy day ever comes to pass.

‘I don’t know Moule except by reputation.

‘I was senior curate to Hugh Stowell, assistant to Capel Molyneux, and with Hugh M’Neile’s successor, Dr Carpenter, in my earlier days.

‘Your paper on “Scepticism” is deeply interesting, and places the phases of modern thought in a very clear light. It would have helped me when I preached in your city before the British Association, by desire of Sir Lyon Playfair.

‘With every sacred feeling of esteem and affection, I remain, ever most cordially yours, C. R. GORDON.’

There is not much in the following note from Dr. Fleming Stevenson, congratulating him on his Moderatorship (see Chap. xx.), but it shows the cordial relations between Dr. Brown and one of the noblest representatives of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Most deeply did he desire the welfare of that church,

and glad he was when the storm subsided, referred to in Dr. Stevenson's letter :—

‘ORWELL BANK, RATHGAR, DUBLIN,

‘8th June 1885.

‘MY DEAR SIR,—I had proposed writing my congratulations, and at the same time tardily acknowledging the pleasure a letter of yours gave me some months ago, when the post brought me your address at the opening of the Assembly; and although it is now two o'clock in the morning, I dare not delay another day. It has been a sincere satisfaction to think of you in the high office of Moderator, for which few have had the training of so ripe an experience, and to which few could bring so much honour. I trust you will not find it so hard and onerous an office as with us, where it means about 104 special sermons during the year. Your address interested me deeply by its clear and broad survey and its noble pleading for the missions of the Church. I thank you also for words that touch myself. Though undeserved, I prize them as I would from few men.

‘We are still in the agonies of our Assembly, and have played the old tune upon the music question, this time with variations, to the amusement and amazement of our U.P. brethren, who were with us by a strong deputation. If the one heartbreaking struggle was over, we would do well; for, financially, we have had the best of all our years; and what is far better, we have a number of most earnest men among our younger ministers, and a spiritual movement of much intensity spreading among several congregations, and marked by many quiet but striking conversions. It is as yet far below '59 in importance, but we have had nothing like it since that year.

‘We shall watch your year of office with deep interest,

and pray that when the year is over many more may still be given you for our Lord's great work.—Believe me, very truly yours,

W. FLEMING STEVENSON.'

In the course of correspondence with intimate friends, Dr. Brown was in the habit of expressing his mind freely on the sayings and doings of some of his own friends and brethren with whom he did not always agree. We have noted that even when he thought that his brethren were pursuing mischievous courses, he wrote of them in a friendly spirit, and with cordial appreciation of services which they had rendered in other ways. Perhaps his strongest language was applied to what he considered the recklessness of Professor Bruce; at the same time, writing to a very intimate friend, he upholds him as a believing man, and recognises his service to evangelical truth in editing (with a clerical friend) the Hymn-Book of the Free Church at enormous labour, and untold hours for a year or two. For this, he said, we owe him a debt which we cannot repay. 'But whereas the right attitude of a believing critic of the New Testament is the believing attitude, the sympathetic, that of one whose spirit is steeped in the great and precious truths he writes and lives on, *he* writes in the attitude of an outsider, inquiring how far we have reliable materials out of which Christianity may be extracted. And dealing exclusively with the three Synoptic Gospels, he finds in them not even the promise of the Holy Ghost, save in one verse at the close of Luke. And whereas Christ said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now; howbeit

when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth," etc., all that he leaves entirely out, and therefore cannot touch the ripe, full-blown, final Christianity in the Epistles. No doubt he promises to take that next. But he may never live to write more. A lady once got introduced to Dr. Duncan to ask his opinion of *Ecce Homo* (then all the rage), thrown as she was into sceptical company. He took no notice of her question, but went on with what he was saying on something else. So, despairing, she held out her hand to say good-bye. He kept hold of her hand and said solemnly, 'Madam, you asked my opinion of *Ecce Homo*? All I will say is, that the man who can write a whole book about Jesus Christ, and tell you at the end of it that in another book he will tell you his opinion of Him, is not a man that we should have much to do with.'

Of the brilliant men, reared for the ministry of the Free Church, and forming an important section of the theological leaders of the day, several were his own students, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *Expositor* and the *British Weekly*, Dr. Hastings, editor of the *Expository Times* and the new *Bible Dictionary*, and Professor Salmond, editor of the *Critical Review*. For all of these he retained the warmest affection, and with all he remained on friendly terms to the end. And many of our other brilliant men he knew well and loved much. Most sincerely did he recognise their personal piety, and acknowledge their earnest purpose. But he had always a suspicion whereunto their new views would grow. He rejoiced greatly in the start of the *British Weekly*, but did not

hesitate to tell the editor of certain disappointments. Yet had he lived a few months longer, he must have welcomed with all his heart and soul the powerful and noble efforts of Dr. Robertson Nicoll, not only to uphold the glorious doctrine of propitiation through the blood of Christ, as the very heart and kernel of Christianity, but to insist on its perpetual youthfulness and vigour when preached in the power of the Holy Ghost, and to summon all ministers of the Gospel to enter into the spirit of it, as what will ever prove to be in all ages 'the power of God unto salvation.'

Towards the Broad Church generally Dr. Brown took up a much more discriminating attitude than Mr. Spurgeon, whose criticism lost much of its force from its wholly denunciatory tone. But in general the affinities between Mr. Spurgeon and Dr. Brown were of the very closest. The following trifle illustrates one property common to both—their sense of humour:—

'NIGHTINGALE LANE, CLAPHAM, May 11.

'DEAR SIR,—I have to apologise for having troubled you twice about so small a matter as your autograph; but the fact is, I did not recognise Dr. David Brown of *Duncan's Memoir* as the David Brown of the *Commentary*. Pray excuse me. I am getting to fear and tremble about the Browns. You must know that the President and Vice-President of our Baptist Union are both Browns, and that the chairman of our London Association is also a Brown. "Browns to right of us, Browns to left of us," etc. God bless them all.—
Yours heartily,

C. H. SPURGEON.'

On one occasion when Mr. Spurgeon had come to Aberdeen to deliver a lecture, Dr. Brown found him in the anteroom surrounded by a number of friends, full of high expectation. A deacon of Mr. Spurgeon's, who accompanied him, told Dr. Brown that if Mr. Spurgeon had not a few quiet minutes his lecture would be a failure. The room was accordingly cleared. But the great preacher seemed in great distress of spirit, as if he could not get along. Even in the hall, he was manifestly out of sorts, groaning in spirit. Dr. Brown told him that he would hold up his hands in prayer. 'Thank you for that!' was the cordial answer. And twice he repeated 'Thank you for that! Thank you for that!' The lecture turned out a very brilliant one; and when friends came at the end to express their thanks and admiration, Mr. Spurgeon, turning to Dr. Brown, remarked, 'You owe it all to him.'

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PRINCIPALSHIP

THE office of Principal in the Free Church College of Aberdeen having become vacant by the death of Principal Lumsden, Dr. Brown from the very first appeared beyond all doubt the man who should be elected to the office. On the occurrence of vacancies it is the practice of the Free Church to invite its several Presbyteries and Synods to forward to the General Assembly the names of those whom they recommend. This secures that should there be any man of eminent qualifications who happens to be little known beyond his own neighbourhood, his claims shall not be overlooked. The Presbyteries and Synods nominated Dr. Brown with hardly an exception. A few votes were given for another professor; but seeing the church to be practically unanimous, he withdrew. When the General Assembly met in May 1876, Dr. Brown was elected, but not without opposition.

The opposition was of so frivolous a nature as hardly to bear a deliberate statement of its grounds. A Memorial to the General Assembly from a few Aberdeen elders, not being in proper form, was stopped *in transitu*, and never made public. The only reasonable ground on which objection could be taken to him was his age,

for he was now seventy-three, and likewise the fact that he had been somewhat discursive as a professor, and much occupied with outside matters. No opposition was offered to him in the Assembly, but a motion was made for delay, so obviously foolish that it was rejected by 243 votes to 49. Thereafter Dr. Brown was unanimously elected to the office. In speaking of him, Dr. Adam said that since the death of Dr. Patrick Fairbairn there was no minister in the church of a higher theological reputation. His work upon the *Second Advent* was a standard one, and his *Commentary* was characterised by great research, peculiarly fine exegetical tact, vividness and freshness of expression, combined with a fragrance, unction, and spirituality all the more acceptable because of its rarity in this class of publications. Dr. Brown was undoubtedly a man of refined taste, of gentlemanly appearance and bearing—a thing of importance in one who was to occupy such a position—and though advanced in life he retained in a remarkable degree the freshness and vivacity of youth. An Aberdeen elder, Mr. David Mitchell, remarked that Dr. Brown had a reputation as wide as Christendom as a theologian and a scholar, and as the author of very important theological works; but highest of all was the spiritual character of the man. The Hall at Aberdeen required a man of faith and prayer, a man who by his faith and prayer could open the windows of heaven and bring down showers of blessing on young aspirants to the ministry.

His duties as Principal, in addition to those of his chair, which he retained for nine years after, were mainly limited to presiding at the meetings of *Senatus*, and

delivering the closing address at the end of the session. On many of his public addresses he bestowed much pains; and if his ordinary prelections were somewhat unfinished, and more colloquial than academical, his carefully prepared opening and closing lectures were alike comprehensive and complete in structure, and clear and often beautiful in expression. At the age of fourscore and ten, he chose as his subject 'The changes in the religious life of Scotland that have taken place during the present century.' It is full of historical anecdotes and reminiscences, and more interesting to general readers than a theological disquisition would have been.

Here, for example, is an account of his father's tutor, Mr. Cowie, who afterwards became a most distinguished preacher in the Secession Church at Huntly, but was deposed and excommunicated by his synod for attending Mr. Haldane, and other 'missionary preachers.' No doubt Dr. Brown recalled him with a tender reminiscence of the case of his own mother. It is of him that George Macdonald has written so warmly.

'He was one of the holiest of men, and one of the two greatest preachers of the Secession Church. Dr. Morrison, of London, who heard him when a young man, bore this testimony of him: "He had no equal in the pulpit of the north of Scotland. He could declaim, and he could be pathetic. His style was somewhat colloquial. He had studied human nature, and knew how to approach it at every avenue. The power he had over an audience was great beyond description. He could make them smile or weep. But he

never lost sight of the theme of the pulpit. All things were by him counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. I have seen hundreds dissolved in tears under his ministry." Such a man could not be restrained from hearing Mr. Haldane. But knowing what it would cost him, after the decree of the synod against hearing preachers outside of their own body, he thought he might compromise the matter by not going inside, but sitting at the door. Yet, in 1799, Mr. Cowie was summoned to appear before the synod, and being asked if he had heard missionary preachers, he at first declined to answer, but in a speech made on the occasion he voluntarily acknowledged that he had heard both Mr. Haldane and Mr. Rowland Hill, and said that he considered the conduct of the synod a species of persecution, and as joining with the General Assembly in their opposition to a great work of God. Other proceedings were taken upon this concession, the result of which was that, in April 1800, he was deposed from the office of the ministry, and, with his whole kirk-session, formally excommunicated. In a letter to a friend, Mr. Cowie wrote: "I have been excommunicated by men on earth, and richly do I deserve to be for ever excommunicated by Him whom I have offended more than any other. But instead of frowning upon me when the world does, He meets me in love." His people adhered to him almost like one man, and his popularity was not impaired.'

What a gulf lies between the spirituality of this good man at the beginning of the century and that of Professor Pfeiderer at its close, of whom Dr. Brown spoke afterwards!

Of some of the minor details of social life on which he dwelt in the closing part of the lecture, it might be asked :

‘But what has all this to do with the religious life of the country? Much every way. Wherever there is life there is movement, forward or backward. Ours is a time of searching criticism in religion, as in everything else. Nothing is now taken for granted. Every question, even the deepest, is openly discussed, and we are getting “new departures” on every subject. Theology is no exception, and those things that have been most surely believed among us are now called in question, and the most vital truths have to be made good against the denial of them. In consequence of this, uncertainty as to almost everything in religion extensively prevails. There is also a spurious spirituality which ought to be jealously watched. You will understand what I mean by a remark made to me by an Edinburgh student of theology, who spent a whole winter studying at Berlin. I asked him, after he was licensed, whose lectures he chiefly attended. He answered, “Pfleiderer’s.” “What? Pfleiderer does not believe in the supernatural at all.” “Oh, but he’s very spiritual.” Well, I believe the spirituality he means is a reality; but it is the craving of his heart for God, after he has lost faith in the facts and the truths on which alone he can have satisfactory footing for what he wants. Pfleiderer himself has been amongst us as one of the Gifford Lecturers; and, taking advantage of that position, he has, with questionable propriety, expounded his anti-supernatural Christianity to large audiences. But it is a cheering sign of the sound

and healthy Christianity which is the life of Scottish religion, that the most distinguished professors in the three divisions of the Presbyterian Church have come forward in reply to Professor Pfeiderer—Professors Charteris, Rainy, Dods, and Orr. Yes, gentlemen, the best scholarship in Scotland is on the side of evangelical Christianity. But that is not enough. We want life as well as truth, both in our chairs of divinity and in our pulpits. And it is no small proof that the religious life of the country is decidedly on the increase, that some of the best students in our divinity halls are offering themselves as missionaries, and are willing to go where, in the judgment of the church, they are most needed. Nor do I know any better sign of the rising spiritual life of the country than the continually increased interest taken in foreign missions in all the churches, while money is coming largely in.

‘I want you, gentlemen, to watch this light in the religious life of the country. The spiritual life of the church has to be maintained, else it will decline, for nothing can stand still. Your part, gentlemen, is to throw yourselves into it, and take your own share in your Master’s work. For this purpose you must cherish your own spiritual life. For you cannot impart that which you have not yourselves. Suffer not your theological studies to deaden your spirituality. Walk closely with God in the midst of your studies, as great Bengel (my favourite Biblical scholar) ever did; so that when his students met daily for their studies, and he began with a few words of prayer, they said his prayers were like morning dew. When you preach, remember

that you go to the pulpit as ambassadors for Christ, and as such let yourselves be nothing, and your Master and your message everything; your motto being, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Every opportunity was taken by Dr. Brown to promote an interest in foreign missions; and it is a circumstance well worthy of record that in proportion to its numbers, the Aberdeen Hall of the Free Church has contributed more missionaries than any other, and many of them very able and devoted men.

This may be a suitable place for noticing how Principal Brown interested himself in one or two collateral subjects. The first we mention is especially in the fusion of King's and Marischal Colleges and Universities into the University of Aberdeen.

It showed his independence of feeling and freedom from local prejudice, that when the union of the two universities was under discussion, he was strongly in favour of it, although he could not but feel how inconvenient in many ways the arrangement would be which proposed to transfer the Faculties of Arts and Divinity wholly to the Old Town.

On the 9th July 1858, just a year after his appointment as professor, the subject was discussed in the Free Church Presbytery of Aberdeen. A motion unfavourable to the proposed amalgamation was submitted to the Presbytery, in opposition to which Dr. Brown moved—'That this Presbytery is of opinion that the Lord Advocate's Universities (Scotland) Bill, as

amended in the Committee of the House of Commons, is fitted to advance the best interests of the Scottish universities in general, and those of Aberdeen in particular, and do accordingly resolve to petition the House of Lords in favour of the same.'

Dr. Brown made an elaborate speech on the subject, showing that he had taken pains to master it in all its bearings. Long before, as a graduate of Marischal College, he had been a member of a committee of graduates appointed to watch over the interests of that college, when Joseph Hume, as Lord Rector, had resolved to hold a rectorial court; and by appointment of that committee he had corresponded with Principal Lee, Dr. M'Crie, and others versed in the charters of our Scottish universities, to get information affecting the rights of graduates. Now that after an absence of full twenty years he had returned to Aberdeen, he was able to view the whole question free from local bias. And the conclusion to which he had come was, that the best thing for the Aberdeen colleges was to fuse them both into one strong university. He had read up the history of the colleges, and knew that for two hundred years the present arrangement had been held to be unsatisfactory, and many proposals had been made to effect a change. More especially in 1747, when a similar union of colleges was effected, with the happiest results, at St. Andrews, an effort for union was made at Aberdeen, but failed from adverse local feeling. In 1754, 1770, and 1786 similar attempts had been made, with a similar result. During the present century three Royal Commissions had sat on the subject—the first called Sir Robert Peel's Commission, of which Lord Rosebery,

Lord Aberdeen, Lord Moncreiff, Dr. Cook, and Mr. John Hope were members. The Commission was unanimous in favour of union, with the exception of the Duke of Gordon. In 1835, Mr. Bannerman, M.P. for the city, brought in a bill to carry out this report, but local feeling being against it, it was referred to another Commission, with Lord Errol at its head. The same conclusion was come to, but again local feeling frustrated the recommendation. From this time nothing was done till 1854, when Lord Aberdeen was in power, and an impulse was given to the movement through a scheme of union drawn up by a committee of the Senates of both colleges, on which Lord Elcho was sent by the Government to report.

In 1856, the Lord Advocate brought in a bill founded on suggestions he had obtained from both colleges; but this, though it went no further than a partial union, seemed to meet with no more favour than the schemes for entire fusion. At length, by the desire of the county, the town, and the universities alike, a third Commission was appointed in 1857; in their report, in 1858, the members came to the same conclusion, though the strength of local feeling allowed them to propose only a partial union. All this made it plain that, on its own merits, union commended itself to every impartial judgment, and that the opposition, as the last Commission said, 'appears to rest mainly on grounds which we must characterise as more creditable to the feelings than to the judgment of the opposing parties.'

The great ostensible argument against any union was,

that it would interfere with vested interests, and likewise with the plans of the founders. But it was shown that the 'foundatoures' had not been treated with much deference in the case of St. Andrews, first when St. Mary's College was restricted to theology, and thereafter when St. Leonard's and St. Salvator's were united. Sir Robert Peel's Commission had laid it down (and, it may be added, subsequent commissions on endowed schools have followed suit), that 'to attain the true object for which literary and scientific institutions are established, they must be accommodated to the several ages through which they endure'; and if this principle was proceeded on in the case of St. Andrews, there was much greater need, according to Sir Robert Peel's Commission, to carry it into effect in the case of Aberdeen.

The chief argument for uniting the two universities was the interest of university education. As the magistrates had said, in their memorial to Lord Aberdeen in 1854, 'the whole establishment is depressed in every department by the want of due encouragement and support by the legislature.' 'We want new chairs,' said Dr. Brown, 'we want retiring allowances, we want philosophical apparatus, we want the means of providing an adequate museum, we want a botanic garden. Will any one be bold enough to maintain that we have any reasonable hope of getting all this, or that it would even be reasonable to ask, that to any adequate amount it should be given for each of our colleges?' He concluded by expressing his regret that so many of his brethren were opposed to his views. He hoped they would come to see that they

were the soundest for the interests of both collegiate institutions.

In the Presbytery, fourteen voted against, and four with Dr. Brown. But, as every one knows, the union was carried into effect. And though there has been both gain and loss, it cannot be doubted that the gain has greatly preponderated. The united University of Aberdeen has more than double the strength, double the efficiency, and double the prestige of the two separate establishments. It is worthy of note that in an Appeal from the Aberdeen Universities Endowment Association just issued (January 1898), the chief objects that are still in need of support include those specified by Dr. Brown, (retiring allowances having been provided), viz., new chairs and lectureships, a botanic garden, laboratory and museum accommodation, and further provision for the library. Use and wont had confined the ideas of many worthy men to a very small conception of the purposes of a university; Dr. Brown, with higher ideas, desired such enlargement as should make that of Aberdeen worthy of the name.

The great interest that he had shown in the proposed fusion of the universities gave him an excellent standing among university reformers, and led to his being examined by the latest University Commission on a point on which he felt a lively interest. It was his desire that the members of the University Council, the whole body of graduates, should have a definite part in the appointment of professors. He did not propose to confer on them the right to elect; but he thought that some such plan as that

followed in the Free Church in the election of professors might be advantageously adopted. According to that plan (as already stated) each Presbytery and Synod is invited to send to the College Committee the names of the men whom it judges most suitable for the vacant office. When these lists are completed, and it is ascertained for whom the greatest number of nominations is given, the General Assembly (the electing body) could not but be influenced by the expression of the general mind of the church, although it was by no means restricted in its choice by that consideration. In like manner, it appeared to Dr. Brown that if some such right of suggestion were conceded to graduates, they would not feel themselves entirely shut out, and their interest in university matters generally would be increased. Any arrangement that would contribute to keep up the interest of graduates in the welfare of the university, seemed to Dr. Brown worthy of all encouragement.

Among the many public bodies which sent letters of sympathy to the family of Dr. Brown at the time of his death, was the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. The Chairman of the Acting Committee (Mr. A. O. Gill), remarked that Principal Brown was one of the original founders of the Association, and was present at the first meeting in the Music Hall in 1870, and had been a member of the acting committee since 1873.

In 1875, when a society was formed for the Aid of

Discharged Prisoners, he was elected a member, and held office continuously till his death.

It may indeed be said that he was in active sympathy with all the social and philanthropic movements of the day that were in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel.

CHAPTER XIX

LATER WRITINGS

THE later writings of Dr. Brown, by which we mean those published after he became a Professor, include his book on the *Restoration of the Jews*, his *Life of Dr. Duncan*, his Commentaries on Romans and Corinthians, his latest book of all, *On the Structure of the Apocalypse*, a few separate lectures and addresses, and a large number of papers contributed by him to the *Sunday Magazine*, the *Expositor*, the *Expository Times*, the *Thinker*, *Youth*, the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, and other journals.

The work entitled *The Restoration of the Jews: the History, Principles, and Bearings of the Question*, though containing papers of earlier date, was not issued as a volume till 1861. It is a remarkably learned, clear, and convincing discussion of the whole subject, amounting in the judgment of most to a settlement of the question. The author shows a remarkable familiarity with the whole literature of the question; begins with the Fathers of the early centuries, and shows the views of those of them that handled the subject; then advances to the Reformation period, giving special attention to the views of the Dutch divines of the seventeenth century, and some of the English writers on prophecy of the eighteenth. Then he comes to

present times, and takes note of every important writer, English and German, who has discussed the subject. The clearness of his mind is shown in the pains he takes to dissever two things that are often mixed up: the idea of the conversion of the Jews as a nation to Christ, and their subsequent return to their own country; and the theory of a restoration of the ancient Hebrew economy, the rebuilding of the temple, and the making of Jerusalem again the centre of the religious world, the headquarters of Christianity. While he holds to the first, he wholly repudiates the other. Many writers contend that this cannot be done; if you repudiate the restoration of the Jews to their ancient position of God's peculiar people, you must reject their restoration to their country too. In the view of some, when Christ came, the Hebrew people had completed the function for which they were chosen; they had been providentially designed to prepare the way for the Light of the World, and when He appeared, that function being fulfilled, they could have no special standing in the future. Dr. Brown dissents strongly from this endeavour to deprive the seed of Abraham of all special function in the future history of the church. He founds mainly on the eleventh chapter of Romans, where, notwithstanding that the middle wall between Jews and Gentiles had been broken down in Christ, it is contended that the receiving of them at the last would be as life from the dead. He finds that the Abrahamic covenant conveyed three gifts to Abraham and his posterity—the land, the seed, and the blessing. As to the land, it was undoubtedly the property of the nation up to the time of Christ's

coming, though the right had been suspended by the Babylonian Captivity. He finds that in Scripture two things go together—faith and the land; and *vice versâ*, unbelief and deprivation of the land; or, to put it alliteratively, Defection and Dispersion on the one side, Reconciliation and Restoration on the other. All idea of re-purchasing the land is out of the question, for that would imply that God's gift of it to Abraham and his seed as an everlasting possession was absolutely annulled, and that the old condition which attached the actual possession of it to faith, when faith should return, was no longer valid. When the Jews are converted as a nation they will return to their land. Their conversion, resting as it will on a most profound sense of sin and apprehension of divine grace, will be to the Christian Church like life from the dead. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and the life of noble service of Christ that followed, was a foreshadow or type on a small scale of what will result from the conversion of the whole nation. And yet they shall be on but the same foundation before God with other believers in Christ, 'in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.'

This little book is one of great ability. The historical part of it presents a wide, comprehensive survey, in which all the leading authors who have written on the subject pass before us, distinctively and vividly marked. The real state of the question is clearly ascertained, and the arguments for and against fairly and distinctly marshalled. Without repetition or confusion of any kind the question is calmly but effectively

discussed, and when we come to the end we feel that all has been said that needed to be said, and we accept thankfully the threefold conclusion: first, that looking by faith on the crucified Nazarene, 'on Him whom they pierced,' the Jewish nation will undergo a most remarkable conversion; second, that this return of faith will bring to them the restoration of the land; and thirdly, that it will be followed by a marvellous revival of the whole Christian Church.

The Life of Dr. Duncan, issued in 1872, was received with great interest and satisfaction as a successful portrait, so far as a portrait was possible, of so extraordinary a man. Dr. Newman, on receiving a copy, expressed his cordial acknowledgments for the opportunity of making the further acquaintance of a man 'whose devotedness of mind, and depth and independence of thought, I have, from Mr. Knight's *Colloquia*, already learned to respect and honour.' From a very different point of view, the Rev. W. Carus wrote from Winchester: 'I cannot say what delight and profit we have had in reading your intensely interesting Memoir of Dr. Duncan. What a marvellous man he was! And what lessons may we derive from his history and remarks! I quoted his conversion from atheism and Socinianism to the faith of a little child, in a sermon I preached lately at the Cathedral. It was of first-rate use to me, and, I hope, to the hearers.'

The interest in Dr. Duncan, first aroused by Professor Knight's *Colloquia Peripatetica*, and now increased by Dr. Brown's biography, was so great that there followed a volume of Dr. Duncan's sermons and

communion-table addresses, and also a volume of reminiscences by the Rev. Dr. Moody Stuart. Dr. Duncan had been long a member of Free St. Luke's Church, and Dr. Moody Stuart and he had enjoyed much fellowship, not only on the subject of the Jews, in which both had so deep an interest, but on many theological and religious topics besides. It was designed at first that Dr. Moody Stuart's reminiscences should be incorporated with Dr. Brown's biography; but, as it turned out, they would have unduly swelled the book, while they were numerous enough and interesting enough to form a volume by themselves. It was far from being intended as a rival, and was published separately with the hearty concurrence of both writers.

The Structure of the Apocalypse (1891) has prefixed to it an introductory part of earlier date, consisting of three articles or essays—the first maintaining the canonicity of the book; the second, its late date—not, as some maintain, in the Sixties, but in the reign of Domitian, about the end of the century; and the third, a vindication of the Apocalypse from certain contemptuous strictures by the late Sir William Hamilton, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh. The strictures of Sir William were originally published in an article on University Education in the *Edinburgh Review*. The Apocalypse was far enough apart from University Education, and would certainly not have been introduced in such a connection had Sir William not been irresistibly disposed to indulge in a tilt at theologians, ancient and modern. The reply of Dr. Brown was originally pub-

lished in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, at the time when he was a minister in Glasgow. It is a paper of consummate ability, and makes Sir William, great scholar as he undoubtedly was, cut rather a sorry figure. It dissects with the utmost calmness and thoroughness every utterance alleged by Sir William to have been made against the canonicity of the Apocalypse, and every writer alleged to have made it, showing his charges in both respects to have been almost wholly destitute of foundation. It shows, for example, with conclusive clearness, that Calvin and Beza did *not* 'deny the authenticity of the book,' far less 'denounce' it; that Scaliger and Casaubon did not commend Calvin for 'prohibiting the pastors of Geneva from all attempts at its interpretation'; that Calvin gave no such prohibition; that even South, whom Hamilton misnames 'that great Anglican authority,' and who threw out the sarcastic gibe against the Fifth Monarchy men of the Commonwealth, 'that the Apocalypse either found men mad, or made them so,' owned its authenticity, by taking from it the texts of several of his sermons. This paper is perhaps the ablest, the most exact, and the most conclusive that Dr. Brown ever wrote. It said little for the candour and magnanimity of Sir William Hamilton that, after this withering exposure of his inaccuracy, he should have republished the accusations in his collected works without taking any notice of the clear evidence supplied in Dr. Brown's article that they had been made hastily, and that in nearly every case the authorities quoted did not bear out the charges alleged. Had he candidly owned this, it might have been well to let the

matter drop into oblivion ; but inasmuch as the charges still go forth to the world with all the authority of Sir William Hamilton's great name, it was a needed and valuable service to the cause of truth that Dr. Brown rendered when he republished his Essay in his volume on the Apocalypse.

As to the book itself, it is a literary phenomenon, as being the production of a man in his eighty-eighth year. The subject had been familiar to him nearly all his lifetime. Though not equal to his other works in power of thought and vigour of style, it is remarkable as presenting a comprehensive view of the somewhat complicated plan of the Apocalypse, and as giving the result of a great deal of study in compact form and definite language. Dr. Brown expressly and repeatedly repudiated the intention of writing an exposition of the Apocalypse. What he desired was to produce nothing more than an A B C, as he called it, a sort of elementary primer, as an introduction to more elaborate commentaries.

The book is based on the thoroughly *predictive* character of the Apocalypse as an exposition of (1) 'the things which *thou hast seen*' (chap. i.); (2) the things which *are* (chaps. ii. and iii.); and (3) 'the things which shall be hereafter' (chap. iv. *et seq.*) in opposition to those writers who consider the book to indicate merely the general principles on which the course of the history of the church, and especially her conflict with the powers of this world, was to be carried on. Its fundamental position is, that the SEVEN SEALS cover the whole prophetic area of the book; and that the two septenaries—the seven trumpets and the seven

vials—are but subdivisions or supplements of the seals. Besides these, he finds a set of visions, not in septenary form, designed to fill up some of their brief announcements. The choral hymns, presenting a general resemblance to the chorus of Greek tragedy, are an interesting and beautiful feature of the book, designed to express the sentiments of a well-informed and godly soul in noble forms of speech, sometimes anticipating and rejoicing in the final triumph before it actually occurs. The two great opponents of the church are Rome pagan and Rome papal; the doom of the one, occurring early in the history of the church, is portrayed at the opening of the sixth seal, in terms and by symbols so terrible as almost to amount to a description of the last judgment, but really denoting the terrible convulsion that occurred, and the terrible retribution that was inflicted, when the corrupt Roman Empire was shivered and destroyed. The doom of Rome papal is much later; it is connected with the pouring out of the seventh vial, for Dr. Brown—rightly, as we think—prefers the old word ‘vial’ to the ‘bowl’ of the revised version, ‘vial’ being dignified by antiquity and long usage; while, at the best, ‘bowl’ is a somewhat undignified word. Then follows the vision of Satan bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, which event Dr. Brown does not regard as a symbol of the total cessation of Satanic temptation on the earth, but only as an indication that the great enemy would no longer have an organised band of followers to harass and persecute the Church of Christ, such as he has had all these preceding years. Then comes the resurrection of the martyrs—not a

literal or bodily resurrection of individuals, but the revival of the principles for which the martyrs testified, bringing about the triumphant progress of the cause which was dearer to them than life itself. The views expressed as to the spiritual character of this resurrection are the same as those contained in his book on the Second Advent. Then follows the release of Satan, with the renewed organisation of a party on earth hostile to Christ, and then the great battle, which he regards as a battle of principles, not of flesh and blood.

And here the symbolical character of the book passes into the literal. The last judgment is unlike all previous judgments in that it is not a judgment of nations or of systems, but a judgment of individuals. Small and great stand before God, and the great final judgment takes place, whereby an everlasting separation is made between the righteous and the wicked. And then for the righteous comes the everlasting glory, the marriage of the Lamb, and the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

On the Commentaries on Romans and Corinthians we need not enlarge. On the former we may recall the judgment of Dr. Marcus Dods, already noted (p. 97), and for the latter we may give the remarks of an English journal which brings out its features very correctly: 'Corinthians are annotated by Dr. David Brown in his well-known, searching, instructive, and inspiring style. As a commentator, the Doctor is to the manner born. He has always a clear, firm grasp of his subject, and he writes as one who really has

something of value to communicate. He makes the letters to the church at Corinth tell us their whole secrets, unfold their hidden meanings, and discover their latent beauties. The historical settings of the letters, their local references, and their permanent lessons, are all pointed out eloquently, impressively, learnedly. There is a fascination, a courtesy, an unction, a fervour about these notes which will make them popular and profitable for years to come.'

Dr. Brown was a frequent contributor to the *Sunday Magazine* while it was under the editorship of his cousin, Dr. Guthrie. As Mr. Strahan, no mean judge of literature, the publisher and general manager of the journal, used to say, his papers were always good. Most of them were on passages of church history, of which he was very fond; and as he held that at all the church's most important eras, and in all the great countries where she went through her conflicts, her procedure was usually regulated by some powerful individual mind, his historical papers very commonly took the form of biography. And his gifts qualified him for biography, for he could select the most characteristic features of a historical character, and delineate their development in an interesting way. For a considerable time his attention was very specially turned to one of the great heroes of the Reformation, of whom very little was known to readers in general, but whom he deemed worthy of one of the highest places in the history of that period—the Polish reformer, John a-Lasco. A nobler character, or one who made greater sacrifices for the Reformed cause, he did not know.

For a considerable time he cherished a desire to write his life in full. He thought that 'Englishmen should have some interest in a foreign nobleman who sacrificed the highest interests in his own country, and laying his all at the feet of Christ, became a Protestant preacher in another land; who, when thwarted in the great changes he was effecting in the sphere of labour which he had chosen (East Friesland), and forced to seek shelter in England, was quickly appreciated and received with honour by Edward VI. and by Cranmer; who, at their desire, became superintendent of the foreign congregations settled in London, French, Italian, and Belgic (or German), over whom the young king spread the broad shield of his royal protection; who occupied this difficult post to the high satisfaction of all concerned; and who, as long as Edward lived, enjoyed his confidence and esteem.' On Calvinists and Presbyterians, too, a-Lasco had special claims; the Swiss type of Protestantism, as distinguished from the Lutheran, was cordially accepted by him. But the project of an elaborate Life of John a-Lasco somehow fell through, probably from want of encouragement by publishers, and two papers in the *Sunday Magazine* (March and May 1876) were all the tribute to that great and good man he was able to render. The Life of a-Lasco was subsequently written in German by a very able man, the Rev. Dr. Dalton, long minister of the German church at St. Petersburg, and one volume of it was published in English, translated by the Rev. Maurice J. Evans. It did not seem, however, to catch the taste of English readers, and what Dr. Brown wrote two-and-twenty years ago is still probably true

—‘John a-Lasco is scarcely known by name to ordinary readers of church history.’

We have referred already to some of the lectures and addresses which Dr. Brown published from time to time; and to papers in the *Expositor*, the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, and other journals. His most recent papers were contributed to the *Expository Times*, in which journal he could not but feel a lively interest, the accomplished and learned editor, Dr. Hastings, having been one of his own students. It is an interesting proof that long practice had made composition a second nature to him, and indeed one of the main pleasures of his life, that up to his last year, the ninety-fourth, he was always at it. The last of his papers appeared in the *Expository Times* for May 1897, only two and a half months before his death. It is entitled ‘A Rendering Revised.’ It was suggested by a passage in a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Maclaren, in his recent volume, *Triumphant Certainties*, where the eloquent preacher accepts the rendering of 1 John v. 18, ‘He that was begotten of God keepeth him.’ In the Company of Revisers Dr. Brown had fought a battle against this reading, on the ground that nowhere is the expression ‘begotten of God’ (exclusively a Johannine phrase) applied to human beings. The rendering of the Revised Version was adopted solely on manuscript authority, and to Dr. Brown it appeared that manuscript authority could not stand against the uniform usage of the New Testament. There is much of his old acuteness in this short paper, although having been practically blind when he dictated it, it is not so finished in

form as his usual writings. The subject had been discussed by him elaborately in earlier articles, and on the present occasion it was brought up simply to correct Dr. Maclaren. That he should have done so was an extraordinary proof of the keenness of his mind. Most men as they turn old are fain to let many things go that in the keener days of their youth they would have sprung forward to correct; not so Dr. David Brown. The course taken by the Revisers had distressed him for twenty years, and pained him to the end. And in this last paper, after reciting the reasons which he had urged for a different course, in the last sentence, we suppose, he ever wrote for publication, he submits a reiteration of his protest: 'But all this went for nothing with the majority of the Company, for they had determined to adhere to the reading of the Greek text which they had adopted.'

He could still 'contend earnestly' even in his ninety-fourth year!



PORTRAIT OF PRINCIPAL BROWN, D.D.
IN HIS ROBES OF OFFICE AS MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CHAPTER XX

MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It is not easy to account satisfactorily for the fact that such a man as Principal Brown should have passed his eightieth year before being called to the chair of the General Assembly of his church. The reasons that used to be given for passing him over were too trifling to deserve notice. Possibly the reason that influenced men most, without their being conscious of it, was a certain youthfulness of manner, corresponding to the sprightliness of his nature, that seemed hardly compatible with the dignity and gravity of a Moderator. He had so little of the habit of self-assertion, perhaps of self-consciousness, and was so truly humble and contented, that he placed no check on the outflow of his thoughts and feelings, and took no pains to sustain the rôle of a dignified father of the church. But this ought not to have blinded the church to gifts and services that well entitled him to its highest honour. The present writer, who had always thought that he was not sufficiently appreciated, felt constrained to come forward on his behalf, although he very rarely interfered in such matters. At a conference of ministers and elders when the Moderator of next Assembly is practically chosen, he proposed him for this office, in

November 1883. Twenty-six years before, he had supported his claim to a professor's chair; and now, in opposition to another, a most venerable and estimable father, who was supported by Principal Rainy, Dr. W. Wilson, and other men of great influence, he proposed him as Moderator. When a vote was taken, the supporters of Dr. Brown, though a minority, were so numerous as to make it clear that it would be a blunder to pass him over. He was accordingly unanimously chosen as the Moderator of the following General Assembly of the Free Church, which met in May 1885.

The opening address of the Moderator is always listened to with great interest, as he is accustomed to state his views on some of the great questions of the day, and it is expected that he will put forth all his power, and make the address worthy of the occasion. Dr. Brown's address was an answer to the question, 'Watchman, what of the night?' It was a survey of the condition of the whole church, in relation to the great purpose for which the church had been instituted. That purpose was twofold, missionary and pastoral. 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature'—there was the missionary purpose. 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you'—there was the pastoral.

As to the missionary purpose, the church had been woefully remiss, and though the spirit of missions had revived during the century, the mass of mankind were yet in darkness. Why was this? Professor Jowett had said that Christianity had spent itself in the early ages, and had not now the power to bring whole communities to Christ. With that view he could not agree.

The power that had brought in the harvest of Pentecost was still promised to the church, and if the fruits were far less than of old, this could only be due to the want of faith, and prayer, and whole-hearted devotedness on the part of the great mass of ministers and people.

Turning to our own country, he asked, Why are so many of the people in England outside the pale of the church? As to the working classes, they were not inaccessible. 'Secularism has got in among them and poisoned many of them, but few of them are at bottom enemies of religion. . . . If they are approached in a kindly spirit, and with Christian sympathy, you will find in them a quick response. There is a key that can open every heart, and he who knows the loving Christ possesses that key.

" Deep in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore ;
Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more."

But what of the reading and thinking people of our day? 'There has been creeping upon them for many years a sceptical spirit, which is eating into their whole religious beliefs. . . . There seems to be a vague impression that the great truths of religion have some difficulty in holding their ground, and that more or fewer of them will have to be given up. When it comes to this, the battle with unbelief is more than half lost. For this creeping scepticism twines itself, serpent like, about the heart that harbours it, pressing it ever closer and closer, till it stifles all its healthy pulsa-

tions. Ah, yes, ye thoughtful students, let me speak a word to you from my own experience, when I myself, in early days, was like you a keen searcher into truth. . . . And at whose feet are such restless spirits sitting? Is it your Matthew Arnolds, preaching to them in beautiful English that there is something outside the universe that makes for righteousness, but whether it be aught more than a *thing*, he cannot say? Or is it your Herbert Spencers, who tell you that the universe certainly has a source, but what that is is an inscrutable mystery, which to stand in awe of is the only true, the sublimest of all worship? But what says Frederic Harrison to this worship of the inscrutable? He no more believes in a living God than his friend Spencer; but he ridicules him for calling that a religion. It is a pure negation, and a negation is not a religion, nor the shadow of a religion. Excellent that, Mr. Harrison! Why, one may as well talk of worshipping the equator or worshipping a gas!’

Inside the churches, he briefly noted the improvement as to activity and force in the Church of England, though there was much there to cause anxiety. ‘For myself, I cannot doubt that a great future awaits that church—a church of noble principles, noble literature, noble characters, noble capabilities; but whether that is possible, save in a *reconstructed* state, is to me very doubtful.’

Coming to Scotland, and having no time to enlarge on the Established and United Presbyterian Churches, he confined himself to his own. Where was she? and what was to be her future? He began his answer with a word of warning.

‘If this church continues to be blessed with a converted and quickened ministry, bent supremely on the winning of souls, zealous for the spiritual health of their flocks, and eager for the extension of the Redeemer’s kingdom over all lands, it will never die. . . . But how stand we now? Well, in some things we are greatly in advance. The scholarship of our young ministers and their general culture are certainly superior, and in these days we need all that we can have of it if we would keep our ground and adequately meet the wants of the time. Consecrated learning in every department is one of the best gifts which the church can lay at the Master’s feet, and will command the respect of the most indifferent. But, let it be cultivated for its own sake, and in the pulpit it will prove a poor substitute for spiritual power. . . . The truths that out of a full heart go straight to the conscience, that produce broken hearts and weeping eyes, and that point the anxious soul to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world—these are the truths that God specially owns. There is a tendency at present to tone down the sharp features of those saving truths which the world cannot receive, and to represent the Kingdom of God—which except a man be born again he cannot see—as a kind of sublimated humanity, or the natural man with a thin veneering of Christianity. If such shall ever be the preaching of our pulpits, the effect will soon be seen in a waning church, decreasing numbers, and failing resources; for the light will have gone out of our golden candlestick, and He that walketh in the midst of these being no longer there, our house will be left unto us desolate. But, Fathers and brethren,

I hope better things of this church of ours, though I thus lift my warning voice.'

But he was not yet quite done with his warning. He was concerned for a tendency to disparage the Bible, while high regard was cherished for its truths.

'Rest assured, my younger brethren, that whatever uncertainty is thrown over the books of the Bible will in the end attach to the truths which they teach. They talk nowadays of the Gospels as but a collection of the best traditions of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, which industrious caterers were able to put together out of such fragments and recollections as were floating about; requiring therefore to be carefully sifted by us. And the theory which lies at the bottom of the very learned article "Gospels," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and which seems to captivate some scholars, is, that only so much of the Gospel history as is attested alike by the three Synoptic Gospels has the fullest authority; all else being less certain. In that case, what conclusive evidence have we for the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lord, recorded in only two of the Gospels, and for almost anything in the priceless fourth Gospel, most of which is peculiar to itself? At this rate, all that we can certainly know of the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ is reduced to a set of dissolving views, or the mere *sentiment* of Christianity, and even this gets melted into that thin, ill-concealed Unitarianism, which runs through much of the volume I referred to before, the *Scotch Sermons*.'

Yet while carefully guarding the old truths and the

old vehicle in which they are conveyed, we must carefully note the character of the age.

‘We are living in transition times. Great changes are coming over the country in almost everything—political, religious, social, artistic. The discoveries of science are astounding, and the theories they give rise to are, some of them, fatal to all religious belief. But while this will, I believe, redound in the end to the honour of all revealed truth, it will force us to enlarge our conception of the varied ways in which the same truths may be loyally held and expressed, so as not to be enslaved to the precise form of speech handed down by tradition from our honoured fathers, nor yet bound to keep up every trifling usage of their times—times very different from ours—provided there is no religious principle at the bottom of it. I know that here I touch on tender ground. But to give now simply my own private opinion—an opinion, however, of half a century’s duration, and now more firmly held than ever—my judgment is, that in everything *vital* nothing must be yielded, but everything held fast, even to the death; but in things not vital—things that in no degree affect the essentials of our faith and worship as Presbyterians—our true wisdom will be from time to time to make such partial adjustments as to the staunchest and most intelligent friends of the church seem wise, desirable, and almost necessary. The church that will do this, I venture to say, supposing it otherwise sound, will live on; but the church that insists on upholding every usage and every way of procedure which it has inherited from former days, even though these have nothing to recommend them but their antiquity, has in it, I fear, the seeds of decay.’

Finally, in trying to rouse the church to the high demands and noble prospects of the times in which we lived, especially in the field of missions, he found just three things wanting to make the desert blossom as the rose.

‘First, a confident faith in the promise, “I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Second, importunate and unceasing prayer for its speedy fulfilment. And third, a more resolute determination than ever to go in and possess the promised land. . . . O blessed Master, wilt thou not breathe upon this church of ours the power of that *faith* which overcometh the world, of that *importunity* which will give thee no rest, and of a fixed *resolve* to take vengeance on ourselves for past unfaithfulness, past niggardliness, past self-indulgence in this matter. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord.’

All the more was this attitude called for in view of the perils surrounding us.

‘Do we not see at this day all Europe armed to the teeth? . . . Besides this, Nihilistic enemies of all government—haters of righteousness, and peace, and industry, and wealth, themselves desperate and bent on the wreck and ruin of all society? . . . While old Romanism fights as usual for its own hand, intent only on its own supremacy?

‘But when things come to the worst—“men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth”—we know what the end shall be: “At evening time it will be light.” The powers of the world may make war upon the Lamb,

but the Lamb shall overcome them," and "the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." One thing only will then be wanting,—the coming of the Bridegroom, *without whose personal Presence* "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," *can never be satisfied*. "EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS!"

We have given a somewhat copious summary of this address, not only as containing Principal Brown's own sentiments on some of the most important topics of the day, but as a remarkable specimen of vigour, discrimination, and appreciation of the times, on the part of a man who was nearly eighty-one years of age. No trace of failing energies can be found in it. Both mind and soul are in full play. The conservative and the liberal in theology are finely balanced. The features of the age are clearly seen, and its legitimate demands frankly owned, while all that is vital in God's revelation of truth is most firmly maintained. The spirit of the address is not 'Rest and be thankful,' but

' Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war ;
Jesus Christ, your captain,
Going on before.'

The hoary veteran waves his sword in the direction of the foe, and urges his younger brethren to an unwearied contest with all the powers of evil.

Of the other duties of Moderator—opening all the diets of the Assembly with prayer, maintaining order, addressing deputations and representatives of other

churches, presiding at breakfast entertainments, delivering a closing address, and, throughout the following year, opening churches, halls, and bazaars, preaching anniversary sermons, and acting generally as the representative of the church on public occasions—there does not seem to be need for any special record.

It may be noted here that on occasion of his filling the chair, he was presented with a testimonial, amounting to seven hundred guineas, in token of the esteem and good wishes of his friends. This gift was presented to him, in name of the contributors, by a distinguished elder of the church, Mr. Francis Brown Douglas, formerly Lord Provost of the city.

CHAPTER XXI

PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC

FROM the difficulty of arranging this biography in strictly chronological order, our notices of Dr. Brown's personal and family life have necessarily been somewhat detached and casual. For this defect we will now endeavour to make up.

Of his seven children, six were born at the Ord. One died in infancy; of Alexander, the eldest son, we have made special mention. The eldest daughter, Margaret Dyce, was married in the year in which her brother died (1860) to David Stewart, manufacturer, now Sir David Stewart of Banchory House. Mr. Stewart filled the office of Lord Provost for two successive terms of three years, and was so popular that he might have filled it again had he agreed to stand. He likewise contested the representation of the city in Parliament in 1895 in the Liberal-Union interest, in opposition to the Right Hon. James Bryce, but was unsuccessful. The beautiful estate of Banchory, on the banks of the Dee, was associated in more ways than one with the college of which Dr. Brown was Principal. Its former proprietor, Mr. Alexander Thomson, a gentleman of high Christian character and culture,

had always been a warm friend of the Free Church College at Aberdeen, and on his death, besides leaving other benefactions, had instituted a Lectureship designed to promote the alliance of science and religion. Sir David and Lady Stewart have a numerous family, two of whom are married.

Jane Charlotte, the third daughter, married James S. Fyfe, merchant in Manila, and had four children. She died in 1882, and her husband in 1883. All the children survive, and two reside at Aberdeen with their aunt, Miss Catharine Hannah Brown. David Dyce, the only other son, having chosen the medical profession, is now a well-known homœopathic physician in the west end of London. He married a daughter of the late Sir William Coote Seton, Bart., of Pitmedden, and has one son. Hannah and Meredith, the unmarried daughters, devoted themselves with most exemplary affection to care for their father after their mother's death in 1879. A few years ago, Meredith took up an important philanthropic work in London, and as the head of the 'Shaftesbury Institute' in Harrow Street, Lisson Grove, carries on one of those blessed undertakings which seek to blend the Christian and temporal welfare of the people—caring for the young, giving a new chance to the lapsed, in many varied ways aiming at their good, and always taking care to build on the Gospel foundation. During these years the care of their father naturally devolved mainly on Miss Hannah Brown; and when we think of the needs of one who latterly was practically blind and deaf, and for a short time frail and sickly, it will be seen how much she had to do, and it is but justice to her

to say how carefully and patiently and lovingly she did it all.

It is easy to infer from the character of David Brown, in what way he and his like-minded wife would bring up their children. In their case there would be no awful gulf between parent and child. It was a sunny home, radiant with love and tenderness, where one of the chief aims was to draw out the affections and direct them into right channels; where instinct and the Bible alike taught the parents that nothing could thrive but on a foundation of righteousness and in an atmosphere of love, so that to build on that foundation and to create such an atmosphere was their constant endeavour. Next to the Bible, as we have seen, they found the better class of our Christian hymns of great use in moulding the infant mind, and filling it with holy associations. Naturally, the need of redemption would be the great fundamental lesson; and the marvellous love of God in sending his Son to seek and save the lost, the unfailing inference. On all that was essential in moral conduct, the greatest stress would of course be laid. In enforcing the 'Thou shalt nots' of the Decalogue, the bridle was held with no slack hand. But the children were not embarrassed by hosts of interdicts on every given subject, great or small. Enough of liberty was left them to let them feel that, in minor matters, they had to realise their own responsibility, and in riper years to decide and act for themselves.

In their early days, Dr. Brown was the companion of his children both in work and in play. In Glasgow the school holidays were usually spent at some place

on the Clyde, often in the island of Arran, Dr. Brown returning to town on Saturdays to preach on Sundays, and escaping again to the country on the Mondays. For himself he had much enjoyment in his steamboat excursions up and down the Clyde, for they gave him an opportunity of becoming familiar with the details of its beautiful scenery, which he greatly enjoyed. At other times, boating and fishing and roaming up hill and down dale, for he was always a great walker, were favourite recreations. The health of old and young was thus promoted, and along with it, freedom and joyousness of family intercourse.

Family outings were kept up, more or less, to the end. He had several of his family with him when he established the stations at Interlaken and Lucerne, and again when he visited the continent in 1881. Another time he supplied the Free Church at Braemar for six weeks in the absence of the minister, and two successive seasons he supplied Innellan in the same circumstances, living with his family in the manse. Another season the Earl of Aberdeen (Lord Haddo) placed at his disposal his factor's house, which he occupied for two months, his lordship desiring to have him near him that he might enjoy that Christian fellowship and Biblical study in which he delighted. Another family excursion was directed to the island of Skye, with Staffa and Iona and other parts of the west coast; and in his latest years he found very enjoyable summer quarters in the little town of Stonehaven, a few miles south of Aberdeen. For several successive seasons he bent his footsteps thither, till failing strength forbade. Stonehaven is a pleasant little town, nestling round

a bay formed by an opening in the cliffs that guard the north-eastern coast, and in stormy weather baffle the fury of the east wind. On the southern cliff the ruins of the great castle of Dunnottar are yet to be seen, and the Whigs' Vault, where so many of the Covenanters were stifled to death; the churchyard of Dunnottar recalls 'Old Mortality,' as Sir Walter Scott saw him at work, repairing the tombstones of the honoured dead. The banks of two little streams, the Carron and the Cowie, invite one to pleasant strolls; or he may pursue his walk to the romantically situated 'old kirkyard' of Fetteresso, one of the quietest and sweetest resting-places for the dead that could be found. Dr. Brown was fond of walking to the pier, watching the fishermen drawing in their nets, and would drop a word about the fishermen of Galilee and their Lord. When too deaf to hear at a distance, he had a chair placed in church on the platform near to the minister, that if it were possible he might hear him, and so enter into the services of God's house, which he always loved and prized, and from which he was never absent as long as it was possible for him to go.

On the 30th July 1879, eighteen years before his own departure, Dr. Brown sustained an irreparable loss in the death of his wife. Her eyesight had been gradually giving way, and in 1876 she underwent an operation which was but partially successful, and the amount of sight which she was able to regain as the result, was so limited, and continued to decrease so steadily as the years went on, that her spirits were sensibly affected. In the trying spring of 1879 she

caught cold, which, instead of passing off as at other times, caused a disorder of the system, and confined her to bed or to the sofa for several weeks. Rallying a little, her vigorous spirit strove to show itself equal to her old way of life, for she had still the same interest in everything as before, but in vain. In July, shortly before she was to have gone to the country, it was suddenly perceived that her memory had failed her; her appetite also gave way, and great weakness came on, followed by paralysis of the left side. For the few following days, she had ups and downs, and her husband and children were kept in suspense between hope and fear. One Sunday evening she had a remarkable return of consciousness and clearness; they all stood about her bedside singing such hymns as 'Sweeping through the gates,' 'Saviour, more than life to me,' and 'Jesus paid it all.' In this last hymn when they came to the words:

'When from my dying bed
My ransomed soul shall rise,
Then "Jesus paid it all"
Shall rend the vaulted skies':

she said aloud, 'How beautiful! Jesus paid it all! You must sing that again at worship, and let the nurse and the servants hear how free the salvation is.' Though she lingered a day or two longer, these were about her last conscious words. On the Wednesday afternoon, 30th July 1879, she breathed her last, so peacefully, that only a slight change on the face showed that she had entered into her rest. The oppressed and troubled expression that had marked the period of her sufferings passed away, and a sweet

calm rested on her face, symbol of the tranquillity into which her spirit had passed.

Of the esteem in which Mrs. Brown was deservedly held by her Christian friends, many testimonies came with the letters of sympathy which flowed to her husband and family. A single sample, in a letter to one of the daughters from a lady of a different communion, must suffice:—

‘She was one I always liked to go to see, for she was ever kind, and I was always refreshed by talking with her of the Lord who by His Spirit bound us together in the wondrous fellowship of the One Body. . . . How blessed to think that she was so long a witness here for Christ, and sustained your beloved Father in his testimony, specially lately when he stood forth so blessedly for the Word of God. She spoke of that work with such Christ-like feeling when I last saw her. . . . How blessed it is to weep with those that weep, and to remember that every tear you shed is marked by Jesus, and that he wept with Mary and Martha for their brother!’

During the years of her illness, her husband passed through times of manifold strain. In 1876, he was made Principal, with the cordial approval of the church at large, but under the opposition of a knot of local objectors, sufficient to make the situation somewhat uncomfortable. In 1877-78, he was immersed in all the troubles of the Robertson Smith case; and from 1870 he had been in office as a New Testament Reviser, in itself a position of great responsibility and anxiety, and entailing frequent absences from Aberdeen. When to these and the ordinary cares of his professorship there was added the long illness

of his wife, ending in her death, after many changes of hope and fear that kept the spirit in a perpetual unrest, it might have seemed impossible for a man of seventy-six to stand such a complicated strain. His demeanour under it all was very remarkable, and shows how well his spirit had been disciplined, and how truly he was upheld by the everlasting arm.

The affection between him and his wife had been uniformly of the warmest kind. Often did he speak of his forty-three years of cloudless sunshine. Her remarkable intelligence had fitted her for being his counsellor in all the questions which he had had to consider; he never acted without taking counsel with her. She had been his fellow-labourer in delicate pastoral work; the change undergone by Lady Abercromby of Forglen before her death, while Dr. Brown was minister of the Ord, was due as much to her instrumentality as to his. When she died, his heart was stirred to its utmost depth. Many a visit he paid to the chamber of death; most tenderly he stroked the cold hand and the cold face. At the grave he was unable to hold the cord that should have fallen to him. For long after, he paid a weekly visit to the grave.

But he did not come home to mope. He was in a very tender frame at first, and dull; but he braced himself for his duties and responsibilities, and tried to grapple with them as they came on. He recognised this trial and all his trials as the appointment of God, and bereaved and weakened as he felt that he was, he went on, trusting to that strength which is made perfect in weakness. He was always brave, ready to

face what was painful or disagreeable, not flinching from mental struggles; acting in the spirit of the pagan poet, only refined and fortified by Christianity :

‘Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.’

This bravery of spirit was never shown by him more remarkably than now. Nor did he see any reason for giving up his interest in any of the ordinary affairs in life that had hitherto given him pleasure, or for falling into the life of a hermit. He had always found in his work a genuine pleasure and a healthy excitement, and, though not in the same degree, he knew that it would be so still. His old cheerfulness returned in a remarkable measure. People who knew what he had lost wondered to find him so like his old self. Certainly this was not due to want of feeling, but to that remarkable self-control that checked the excess to which grief might naturally have run, because there was still work for him to do in the world; there were still friends whose life he was called to brighten; there was a sphere for faith to show her power to transform trouble and darkness into light and joy; and there was the sure and certain hope of reunion in a better world, where light would fall on the mysteries of life, and God would wipe the tears from every eye.

Of the outer events of Dr. Brown's life, beyond what has already been noted, there is not much to record subsequently to the death of Mrs. Brown. It may be noted that before that, in 1872, his University tardily recognised his literary merits by conferring on

him the honorary degree of D.D. In 1885, the year of his Moderatorship, he was presented with a marble bust, subscribed for by his friends, at a public meeting presided over by Sir William (then Lord Provost) Henderson, 'as a mark of their appreciation of the services he has rendered to the Christian church, and of their affection and esteem for him as a friend and citizen.' The bust occupies a conspicuous place in the hall of the college with which, as Principal and Professor, he was connected forty years.

Another very interesting incident took place in 1894, when the King of Servia bestowed on him the decoration of Knight Commander of the Royal Order of St. Sava. This out-of-the-way, but on that account more notable, honour came through a brother of Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch, who was in the service of his Majesty. He had got Dr. Brown to adapt his Commentary on the Gospels for translation into the language of the Servian people, to whom he deemed that it would be a very great blessing. The honour was bestowed in recognition of his services in this matter.

And lastly, in January 1896, on a notable academical occasion in Aberdeen, the inauguration of the Mitchell Hall and Tower in Marischal College, he was present with a host of notables, to receive the honorary degree of LL.D. Among those who were honoured on this occasion was a relation of his own, a gentleman of great public spirit and Christian activity, Mr. William Ferguson of Kinmundy, one of whose forefathers had been married to a daughter of William Brown, the Secession minister of Craigdam.

We have recorded the principal facts of his life, and there is little need for a special portrait of his character. The disappointments he suffered in his youth in not obtaining a settlement in the ministry, were met in the brave spirit which we have seen him manifesting at the death of his wife; nor did his failure to find a settled home interfere with his diligent application alike to his work and to his studies. In student days he had found himself disposed to late hours in the morning; finding the habit hurtful, he determined to conquer it, and ever after was an early riser. He had the power of applying himself earnestly to any author he might be studying, and he had a retentive memory for what he read. He was fond of general literature, and gave to it such portions of his time as heavier avocations allowed. He had a poetical nature; in his youth he made some verses of no mean merit, and all his life some of the poets were among his favourite authors. When his son was writing his essay on English Christian poets for the Missionary Society of the University of Glasgow, he was greatly interested, and read and studied with him some of the authors with whom he dealt.

Of our older poets, Shakespeare and Milton were his great favourites, and of those more recent, Tennyson and Keble. To these might be added George Herbert, Coleridge, and Longfellow. The *In Memoriam* was endeared to him because he found in it so much that came home to him after the death of his son. Keble's *Christian Year* was a constant delight; he used to carry a copy of it with him. Our Christian Hymnology he likewise found alike

comforting and stimulating—at no time more so, as we shall see in our next chapter—than near his death. Our fictitious literature did not interest him much, not even that of ‘the kail-yard’; not that he had any objection to it in principle as an outlet for the creations of the imagination, but because he had always so much of another kind to occupy him that he had neither time nor inclination for it. In Thackeray and Dickens he could not but admire the vigorous delineations of life, but they did no justice to the evangelical element—rather caricatured it. Probably his favourite kind of reading was Christian biography. We have seen how in his studies of church history, he believed that in connection with every great movement in the church, there was one great man in whose life the events of the period might be studied to advantage, and that in his lectures on church history the biographical element was very strong.

But he had no thought of a biography of himself. Not that he would have objected to a narrative of his life if it should be judged by competent friends likely to be useful for the highest ends of the Kingdom of God. But in his genuine humility he could see little or nothing worthy of record. Certainly he acted on this conviction when he destroyed so many letters, and neither left nor kept a diary. Even to the present biographer it appeared, at the first blush, that for a biography of David Brown one would require the power of a Cuvier to construct *ex ungue leonem*. But his humility was very real. His deference to others often struck his family—even in some cases his deference to themselves. He followed Jeremiah’s counsel, ‘Seek

not great things for thyself'; and Paul's, 'Let nothing be done through envying or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.'

Of his qualities as a friend and companion there is little need to write. He was ever ready of speech and fond of talking; and having a tendency to settled and definite views on the subjects on which he thought, he had something to say. He liked to make friends, and he liked to keep up friendships that were truly congenial. The letters that he wrote were very numerous. He was always very genuine and kindly, and had a pleasant way of giving information. A clergyman of the Church of England once said to him, 'I engage you to walk with me in heaven.' And his friendships were emphatically catholic. He was certainly a decided Free Churchman, a strong Calvinist, and a vehement opponent of Erastianism; but he felt that what in the providential circumstances of the case had been a test question for the Free Church, was not under altered conditions a test question for all. Dean Stanley and Dr. Newman, Mr. Webb Peploe and Dr. Martineau, Bishop Lightfoot and Mr. Frank White, Dr. John Duncan and Mr. Spurgeon, had all sufficient affinities to him to make intercourse with them pleasant and profitable. For the Church of England he had a mingled feeling, in which great respect for its eminent scholars, its faithful preachers, and its high toned and devoted missionaries was modified but not neutralised by a sense of its defects. In short, wherever he found a man in whom devotion to Christ and to Christ's cause predominated, along with somewhat of the loving

spirit of Christ, with that man he was ready to shake hands ; and all the more if he was a cultured scholar, and of that sympathetic nature that could say, '*Nihil humani a me alienum puto.*'

When regard is had to the high gifts, the manifold attainments, and the attractive character of Dr. Brown, some wonder may be felt that in his own church he did not attain a still more commanding influence than he actually possessed. The only explanation of this that can well be given connects itself with his manner. As we have said before, he wanted a certain dignity of manner and power of self-assertion that would have contributed great practical force to his opinions. The remark of Bishop Ellicott is exactly true, that he seemed to feel in the Revision Company that he had done enough when he had stated his views, and that he was not called to fight for them ; to which the Bishop adds that probably more consideration was due to them than they actually received. This too was in a great degree his attitude through life. It was the absence of this power of self-assertion that prevented many from fully recognising his great ability, for the two things are necessary for a leader : sound thinking and the faculty of impressing his views on others. But if the want of this power made him less efficient as a leader, it made him more agreeable as a companion. If you did not agree you might agree to differ, and your fellowship, being that of essentially congenial spirits, might still continue to be sweet and sunny—the fellowship of brethren dwelling together in unity.

But whatever form of activity Dr. Brown might be concerned in prosecuting—whether testifying among

the Revisers for the place due to this Codex or to that, or discussing among his students the prevalent forms of modern unbelief, or setting before them his ideal of the Christian ministry,—he had one high attribute never lost sight of—a profound conviction that the great work of the ministry was to turn souls to God. All roads, it used to be said, lead to Rome; all theological, philosophical, and literary speculation, in the hands of a true minister of the Gospel, lead to the saving of souls. That great truth, so often allowed to slip into a corner in divinity class-rooms, was ever uppermost in his thoughts. Of all the theological professors whom the Free Church has had in her service, no one was more true to this function of the Divinity Hall than Dr. Brown; no one kept it more steadily before his students; and no one pleaded more earnestly and constantly at the throne of grace that it might ever be fresh in their thoughts and in their hearts.

CHAPTER XXII

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

THE foreboding of good Mrs. Dyce, when her puny nephew first breathed the breath of life, and she prayed that he might be taken from a world in which he was too feeble to live, was signally falsified by the ninety-four years of bodily and mental activity which lay before the little atom of mortality. He all but verified the late Sir Benjamin Richardson's theory that, give it fair play, the human frame should last a hundred years. By fair play, Sir Benjamin meant a good constitution to begin with; freedom from accidents and infectious diseases; regular but not excessive employment, moderate eating, abstinence from alcohol, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep. It was under most of these conditions that Dr. Brown spent his life. And there were other things that favoured longevity. His serene temper, his bright outlook on life, his happy home, the love of his family and friends, his habit of committing his way to God, and his conscious enjoyment of His blessing, all conduced to the prolongation of his years. Cicero's charming book, *De Senectute*, he knew and relished, and a year or two before he died he had it by him, in hopes of renewing his acquaintance with it; but blind as he was, that hope had to be abandoned.

But still more familiar and more highly prized were the testimonies of the Psalmist to longevity viewed as the gift of God: 'The righteous shall flourish as the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.' It was always his thankful acknowledgment that he had led a happy life, in spite of narrow means, hard work, many disappointments, and more than one of those bitter trials which when they fall, seem as if they must crush one utterly.

It was not till the year 1892, in his eighty-ninth year, that the silver cord showed symptoms of giving way. And it was an accident that befell him then. On his way to post some letters on the 13th April 1892, he did not observe that the lid of a coal cellar under the pavement had been removed, and tripping over the opening with all his force, he sustained a very great shock, and had one of his legs severely injured. Many of his friends dreaded that so severe an accident at his time of life would have a fatal ending: it confined him to bed three months, and he never was quite equal in strength to what he had been; but he recovered to a wonderful degree, and lived more than five years after.¹ Many a letter of condolence he received from his friends, and many a congratulation when he began to recover; his friend the Bishop of Durham wrote that 'he was

¹ In a letter to a friend, Dr. Brown gives a curious account of the effects of the accident on the nerves of his extremities: 'I am not sure if I told you the strange effect of the accident I met with. The nerves of the extremities (*feet and fingers*) have lost nearly all sensation. In walking I don't feel the ground; it is as if walking on ice. And the tips of my fingers scarcely fix my buttons in dressing. And though I wrote fairly well before, I now am *scarcely legible*.'

glad to hear he was recovering, as it would have been rather an ignominious ending of an honourable career to be extinguished in a coalhole!' Such bits of pleasantry no man enjoyed more than himself.

And in his usual kindly spirit, he was mindful of others in the midst of his own misfortunes. It happened that the present writer had been selected as Moderator of the Free Church Assembly that year. Dr. Brown wrote to him, as a very old friend, hailing like himself from Aberdeen, to express his regret that he could not be present, nor, what would have been a great pleasure, be one of the friends that would accompany him into the Assembly when he took the chair. It was a small matter; but as showing the genuine kindness of the man, it made an impression that has not been forgotten. Twice after, Dr. Brown went to the Assembly (1893 and 1894), but he was not able to stay long. He preached also a few times, and took part in shorter services, but his voice as well as his strength began to fail him. His last attendance at the daily prayer meeting was in the beginning of 1895. In 1893 he had the impression that that was to be his last year; for among his papers one was found giving directions as to the inscription to be placed on his coffin and his grave-stone, the words in this latter case being, 'David Brown, born 1803, died 1893 (or, aged 90).'

In the spring of 1895 he had an attack of inflammation of the bladder, but he recovered, and was able to go to Stonehaven in July. On his birthday in August, a family party gathered at Banchory House, his son-in-law's place, including his son, who had come down from London, and all his other olive plants, and (as he says

in a note to Mr. M'Laren), 'myself among the liveliest and most vigorous of them all.' During the following winter (1895-96), though not strong, he was able to go out a little every day. But in the spring he broke down, the stomach giving way, causing sickness and indigestion. About midsummer he had a return of last year's ailment, and he again began to think the end had come; but he pulled through, so that by September he was pretty well. But the weather was now becoming cold, and he was advised to keep the house. He always cheerfully adapted himself to circumstances, and he quietly acquiesced in this advice, although it must have been a disappointment, for, now that he had become so deaf and so blind, this deprived him of what would have served to break materially the monotony of the day.

His activity of mind, however, remained unabated. He continued to write letters, but in a large, sprawling hand, not easy to decipher. The present writer having gone to Aberdeen in the beginning of 1897 to deliver one of the Murtle lectures, found him, though lying feebly in bed, keenly alive to all that concerned the lecture; that it might be read to him by his daughter, he got the manuscript, returning it next day with an autograph note of thanks.

The subjects on which he wrote to his friends were very various. Exegesis of texts, recent books, Oxford summer school, Keswick, Reminiscences of old times, hymns, Congregationalism, Wesleyanism, Presbyterianism (all of these church systems he thought might be drawn closer) were a few of many. His family tried as far as possible to gratify his thirst for books and journals by reading to him. But it was not

easy to prevent a feeling of weariness. Not only his daughter read to him, but a boy who had been hired for an hour a day, and even a maid, who was a faithful attendant. The boy got the heavier books, such as Professor Salmond's *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, Dean Stanley's *Life and Letters*, G.S. Romanes's *Life and Letters* (Physicus), and a daily portion from the *Lyra Christiana*, the much prized gift of his friend, Mr. David M'Laren. His interest in the outer world was very keen. The daily newspaper had to be gone over, and all kinds of news, local, political, ecclesiastical, proceedings of school board and of town council, university news, and even agricultural news had all to be read.

Family prayers continued to be offered, his daughter reading the passage, on which he would sometimes give appropriate comments, and the prayers were always warm and full of unction. Singing at family worship had always been the habit of the family, but latterly it had to be given up. Still he retained his interest in music, and with a musical grandson, who lived with him, he would often have conversation on that subject. This grandson has noted some interesting reminiscences. He told him that he had a great fondness for classical music, and that if he had a favourite, it was Mozart. He used to recall early days, when he and his brothers would join in the execution of some of Mozart's masses—probably as a string quartet. He was particularly fond of a certain 'Gloria in Excelsis,' he did not mention the number of the mass—probably it was the twelfth. He had also a strong love of the old Scottish music, especially Jacobite melodies. All weird and plaintive melodies appealed to him

powerfully. He told of a musical performance at which he was once present when Mendelssohn was to perform on the organ. As he was late of arriving, the local organist had to fill up the interval, which he did with a selection of Scottish airs. Mendelssohn, hearing what was going on, slipped quietly into his place, and continued the Scottish strain with his brilliant improvising. The electrified audience, looking up, soon came to comprehend the mysterious change. In church music he delighted in the Gregorian and other chants, but with a strong conviction that the music must suit the subject—which he did not find to be always the case.

The old love of writing for the press continued almost to the last. Dr. Hastings has furnished a list of his contributions to the *Expository Times*, which shows that between the time of his accident and his death he contributed to that journal no fewer than ten papers. It is an interesting memorial of the activity of a nonagenarian's mind.

1. 'F. H. A. Scrivener,' 1892, vol. iii. pp. 126-128.
2. 'Some Gains of the Revised Version,' 1892, vol. iii. pp. 259, 260.
3. 'Some Gains of the Revised Version,' 1895, vol. vi. p. 81, and pp. 130, 131.
4. 'Is the Revised Version a Failure?' 1893, vol. iv. pp. 63-65.
5. 'Women in the Acts,' 1893, vol. iv. p. 518.
6. 'The Synoptic Problem,' 1895, vol. vi. pp. 272-274.
7. 'The Aorist in the Greek Testament,' 1896, vol. vii. pp. 75-77.
8. 'The Elder Brother of the Prodigal Son,' 1896, vol. vii. pp. 325, 326.

9. 'What the Bible Teaches about the Human Body,' 1897, vol. viii. pp. 127-131.
10. 'A Rendering Revised,' 1897, vol. viii. pp. 374, 375.

There were other journals, more or less important, in which he continued to hold intercourse with his fellows. He was fond of recalling old days, and to the young people of his church, in their magazine called *Youth*, he would spin yarns of the olden time, going back to the chivalrous days of the Disruption. And thus it came to pass, that unlike many old men, who on their retirement fall quite out of sight, so that when their death is announced a dozen years afterwards, people say, Is it possible he has been alive all this time?—unlike such, Dr. Brown remained among us, a living figure, almost to the last. And people got more and more interested in him as he got among the nineties; his townsmen became proud of him, as a sort of 'Apostolus Juventutis,' and some speculated as to the possibility of his making out the century. That, however, was not to be. So far as we remember, the church in Scotland in the nineteenth century has had but one minister whose term of life reached to three figures—the late Dr. Ingram of the Free Church in Unst, the most northerly parish in Her Majesty's British dominions.

But the experiences of a life-long servant of Christ in the prospect of the life to come demand more explicit reference. As to the precise nature of the future state he had little to say, because he found little revealed. In one of the papers in the *Expository Times*, 'What the Bible Teaches about the Human Body,'

after quoting the two texts, 'We know that if He shall be made manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is' (1 John iii. 2, R.V.), and 'We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the Body of His glory' (Phil. iii. 20, 21, R.V.), he asks, 'Does the reader, in his still moments, try to realise to himself what that radiant form, the body of His glory, will be like? I confess I sometimes do. That fine hymn-writer, Ray Palmer, I am sure, did, for thus he sings:—

"Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Thine :
The veil of flesh hangs dark between
Thy blessèd face and mine.

I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
Yet art Thou oft with me ;
And earth hath ne'er so dear a spot
As where I meet with Thee.

Yet, though I see Thee not, and still
Must rest in faith alone,
I love Thee, dearest Lord, and still,
Unseen but not unknown.

When death these mortal eyes shall seal,
And still this throbbing heart,
The rending veil shall Thee reveal,
All glorious as Thou art."

'But no, he is scarcely right there. It will only be when "we shall see Him, even as He is," in "the body of His glory." To be at home with the Lord at death is enough in the meantime. But the best is yet to come.'

This had reference to the body ; but as to the future state generally, he had little to say but that he was sure of it. ‘I reason with myself,’ he writes to a friend, ‘what know I, apart from Revelation? One thing I cannot doubt, that I shall still exist after I die. For I cannot be a materialist. But beyond that fact all is blank. Then, I am as sure as I am of any undisputed fact, that Christ rose again the third day, and that He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and so I am a Christian. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable (R.V.), not “miserable.” But I am not pitiable, for I have that hope. . . . I preached at the funeral of Dr. Donald Fraser at Inverness a sermon on “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” The *silences* of Scripture show it to be divine (I said) as much as its utterances. On what many would most wish it to speak, it says nothing. But on what it is of most importance we should be informed about, it speaks plainly. And here we learn (1) that after death we shall have a self-conscious existence, or shall be *ourselves* still. The penitent on the cross was to be so: ‘*Thou* shalt be with me”; (2) we also believe we are *with Christ* at death—“absent from the body, present with the Lord.” But a disembodied spirit is incapable of experiencing the bliss of the resurrection life: “to be with Christ” can only be to be consciously present with Him as a fact, but not, 1 John iii. 2, “*to see Him as He is.*” The Shorter Catechism says, “We immediately pass into glory”; but only a partial glory, only “to be with Him.” . . . I have put in writing the thoughts suggested by your letter, and they are briefly these: “I

fall back on the Book, and I mean to die on the faith of its statements, until I know even as I am known.”

Dr. Brown's love of hymns stood him in good stead, as he lay abed, in more ways than one. Of course, the holy Scriptures were the fountain of the meditations on which faith rested, and by which new peace and joy were continually flowing into his soul; but the hymns were a blessed mode of conveying the sweetness and the strength of many a Bible truth. Unable any longer to sing himself, he had yet enough of hearing power left him to enjoy them as sung by his daughter. And in the dark hours (and, though not so blind as Milton, he yet found that not to him returned day and night as they had returned before), it was a happy experience to be borne along the rhythmical current of the songs of Zion, and become familiarised through them with bright visions of things unseen. When Mr. M'Laren presented his last Christmas gift, Dr. Cuyler's 'Beulah land' 'to one far on in the Beulah land,' he wrote, with his accustomed humility and honesty, 'At my age I ought to be there; but my sun does not shine by night as well as by day, and sometimes it does not shine at all. I get glimpses of His presence, and these are very sweet, and, as Ray Palmer says:—

“And earth has ne'er so dear a spot
As when I meet with Thee.”

This hymn (already quoted, see p. 345) took a singular hold of him, and was very frequently referred to both in conversation and in letters.

Comparatively late in life he became acquainted with the hymns of Dean Alford, and some of them were great favourites. Two of them we subjoin.

TRUST

- 1 I know not if or dark or bright
Shall be my lot,
If that wherein my hopes delight
Be best or not.
- 2 It may be mine to drag for years
Toil's heavy chain,
Or day and night my meat be tears
Or bed of pain.
- 3 Dear faces may surround my hearth
With smiles and glee,
Or I may dwell alone, and mirth
Be strange to me.
- 4 My barque is wafted to the strand
By breath divine,
And on the helm there rests a Hand
Other than mine.
- 5 One who has known in storms to sail
I have on board ;
Above the raging of the gale
I have my Lord.
- 6 He holds me when the billows smite,
I shall not fall.
If sharp, 'tis short ; if long, 'tis light ;
He tempers all.
- 7 Safe to the land ! Safe to the land !
The end is this ;
And then with Him go hand in hand
Far into bliss.

Dean Alford.

DEATH AND LIFE

- 1 Jesus, when I fainting lie,
And the world is flitting by,
Hold up my head.
When the cry is 'Thou must die,'
And the dread hour draweth nigh,
Stand by my bed.
- 2 Jesus, when the worst is o'er,
And they bear me from the door,
Meet the sorrowing throng.
'Weep not,' let the mourners hear,
Widow's woe and orphan's tear
Turn into song.
- 3 Jesus, in the last great day,
Come Thou down, and touch my clay,
Speak the word, '*Arise.*'
Friend to gladsome friend restore,
Living, praising evermore,
Above the skies.

From April 1897 Dr. Brown was but little out of bed. It became evident that he was gradually becoming weaker, and that the end could not be far off; but at last it came somewhat abruptly. On the morning of Saturday the 3rd July, when Miss Brown went into his room, she heard him repeating the lines in a faint voice:—

'When I am to die,
Receive me, I'll cry,
For Jesus hath loved me,
I cannot tell why;
But this I do find,
We two are so joined,
That He won't be in glory
And leave me behind.'

He then fell asleep, but awoke an hour later and asked his daughter to repeat to him some lines of the well-known hymn :—

‘ Happy day
When Jesus washed my sins away.’

Soon after, he fell into unconsciousness, and remained in that state till the end came quietly, a little before six o’clock in the evening.

It was a graceful act on the part of the Lord Provost and Magistrates to offer the distinction of a public funeral to Dr. Brown. The offer having been accepted, the Lord Provost and other members of the town council attended in their official robes ; also the University Court and Senatus ; the Free Church Presbytery and Synod of Aberdeen, his own colleagues, and the students of the college ; the officebearers of the Free South Church ; Principal Rainy of Edinburgh ; Mr. Ross of Cowcaddens ; a large number of ministers of various denominations, and in addition to the family and relations, very many friends and others desirous of showing their respect for the deceased. The Hall of the Free Church College, where the service was held and in which the coffin lay, was crowded to overflowing, although no invitations had been issued. The streets were lined by spectators, and on the way to the grave all the shop windows were closed. In the devotional services, all felt the special solemnity and suitability of the prayer of Principal Rainy, and his fervent and comprehensive acknowledgment of the gifts conferred by God upon his servant.

‘Surely goodness and mercy hath followed him. We thank Thee, O Lord, for many advantages granted to him, and many excellent gifts bestowed on him by which he was useful during a long life—so long a life—to the church and to the world. We thank Thee, specially, that it pleased Thee early to manifest to him Thy great love in Christ Jesus, and to enable him to receive into his heart the gospel of Thy grace. We thank Thee, Lord, for the honourable place given to him in Thy church, and for the paths of usefulness opened to him, and for all that he was able to be to the Christians of his own day, and to the college, in the work of the ministry, and by private influences of various kinds. Especially at this time we remember the warm heart he had to the work of the gospel, the great interest he took in the awakening and conversion of sinners, and in the whole work and ministry of the church of Christ. We remember his fidelity to his convictions of truth and duty. We remember his great openness of heart to all men of all kinds and of all names. We thank Thee for the place he had in the affections and the esteem of good men in the church and in the world; and we thank Thee that throughout so long a life spent in honour and in the acceptance of his brethren he was upheld and strengthened. We thank Thee that Thou didst give him so much of natural cheerfulness; that Thou hast surrounded him with so much of friendship and of love. And now we desire to acknowledge Thy hand in all this, and we desire to be admonished by the example of Thy dear and honoured servant, whom Thou hast taken from us; and we desire to be followers of his faith, remembering the end of his conversation. We desire to remember how he was exercised in waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we with him desire to lift up our hands, believing that redemption draweth nigh.’

Most appropriately the singing of the favourite hymn of Dr. Brown formed part of the service.

‘Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Thine :
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

.
When death these mortal eyes shall seal,
And still this throbbing heart,
The rending veil shall Thee reveal
All glorious as Thou art.’

The body was laid in the family burying-ground in the Churchyard of St. Nicholas, where so many of his own kindred sleep ; and it lies there waiting that glorious Resurrection, on which during all his life he had thought so much, and with which his hopes of the final glory of the Spouse of Christ were indissolubly united.

The memorial card, dictated by himself, the date being left blank, ran thus :—

In Memoriam

REV. DAVID BROWN, D.D., LL.D.

ENTERED INTO REST

[3 July 1897].

‘I am the resurrection, and the life : he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me, shall never die.’—JOHN xi. 25, 26.

CHAPTER XXIII

TRIBUTES

It is not to end our book with a blaze of eulogy that we devote the last chapter to some of the tributes paid to Dr. Brown; but because the idea of his life comes out better when looked at from various points of view, and the particular features of his character and work that impressed his friends are more distinctly seen.

The local journals contained ample, and in general accurate and well-written narratives of his life, death, and funeral. Many other journals had shorter notices and appreciative sketches. Conspicuous among these was the *British Weekly*, where we may trace the felicitous pen of his old student, our own contributor, Dr. Robertson Nicoll.

‘Exegesis of the New Testament was his congenial subject, and he prepared various commentaries which had a very wide circulation and influence. His best quality, as has been well said, was his steady, life-long zeal for souls. This never changed, never abated, was always quick and warm. . . . His work as a speaker was always uncertain. He might be excellent, or he might be very poor, but the fervour of evangelical life never failed him. . . . He loved humanity. . . . He watched with the keenest interest, and almost to his

latest day, every movement of thought. . . . He was decidedly an optimist, was not tired of the world, was never despondent about the fortunes of the church, was always ready to break a lance, and was to the very end an ardent Liberal. He was a convinced advocate of Disestablishment; and much though he longed for the union of Presbyterianism in Scotland, he never believed that it could be accomplished on a State basis. He was also a keen supporter of Home Rule for Ireland, although Mr. Gladstone's attitude on Disestablishment somewhat chilled his sympathy with that statesman.'

From synods, presbyteries, and committees of his church, came many minutes of appreciation, some of them rather formal and general, others of deeper insight, and etched with a more masterly hand. Four of these claim special mention: that of the Free Church Synod of Aberdeen, the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh, the Committee on the Conversion of the Jews, and the Kirk Session of the Free South Church of Aberdeen. To this last we have already referred (see p. 166). We subjoin the tribute of the Jewish Committee, and that of the Free Church Synod of Aberdeen.

'FREE CHURCH OFFICES, EDINBURGH,
' 27th July 1897.

'DEAR MISS BROWN,—On behalf of the Jewish Committee, we have to express their sympathy with you and your brother and sisters in connection with your father's death.

'In common with the whole church, they gratefully remember Dr. Brown's eminent services, and his personal worth, but in a special manner they recall his early devo-

tion to the cause of the Conversion of the Jews long before the Church of Scotland formally took any action in the matter. He was for a time convener of this committee, and he was the life-long friend, and the biographer of Dr. John Duncan, the first minister consecrated to Jewish Mission work in connection with the Scottish Church. His services in these and other ways the committee can never forget; and they are much touched by the lively interest in their work which he continued to manifest in spite of great bodily weakness even to the end of his long and fruitful life.

‘For all that Principal Brown was and did they give thanks to the Great Head of the church, and they feel that in the sorrow which is inseparable from parting with one so well beloved, you will be sustained by the memory of his rare gifts, of his keen consecration of them to the advancement of the Redeemer’s Kingdom, and of the measure in which his services were owned of God.

‘With all kind regards, we are, yours very sincerely,

‘JOHN MORGAN, *Vice-convener.*

‘GEORGE MILNE RAE, *Secretary.*’

From the Free Church Synod of Aberdeen :—

The Synod agreed unanimously to record the following memorial minute regarding the Reverend Principal Brown, D.D. :

‘In recording their sense of loss at the removal from their number of Dr. Brown, the Reverend Principal of the College, the Synod feel that a great blank has been made in the ranks of the Christian community of the city and neighbourhood, in the roll of the Christian ministry, and in the professoriate. A distinguished student in his youth and early manhood, a devoted minister, a distinguished preacher of the Word of God, an able, stimulating, and

learned professor, Dr. Brown was conspicuous for his many gifts, and for his devotion to evangelical truth. In his long life he was called to do much work, to fill many positions of trust and responsibility, and he did excellent service in them, to his generation. He was a man of wide and varied knowledge in many departments of learning, and it was his delight to use all the resources of his learning and thought for the elucidation of the Scriptures. To him Exegesis was a pleasure and a delight. Master of all the sciences needed for the thorough equipment of an exegete, learned in all the sciences needed for the interpretation of the New Testament, he delighted to use them all in order to make the meaning of Scripture plain to the common people. Not only had he the scientific equipment needed, to him was given also the ethical insight into the word of God, and the spiritual discernment of spiritual things, which belong to the children of God. He maintained to the end the childlike freshness of interest in all that concerns men, and especially in all that concerns the kingdom of God, which had been characteristic of him all through his life. The truth of God, the coming of the kingdom of God, the well-being of the church, were among the topics that exercised his mind to his dying hour. Having served his generation well, he has entered into his rest.'

When we pass to the letters of personal friends, we find, out of the mass, many worthy of record. Passing over many from his more immediate circle, we prefer to give a few from friends more remote, either in point of distance, or of church connection. Our space for the most part admits only of extracts.

From Rev. Principal Moule, D.D., Ridley Hall, Cambridge :—

'July 6, 1897.

'MY DEAR MISS BROWN,—Your letter goes to my heart ; it moves me to many tears of love, and reverence, and grief ; grief not for your blessed father, so gently translated to the glorious presence of his Lord, but (all too selfishly) for myself, to whom he was more than I can say. . . . For me, a light has for a season passed away. For more than fifteen or sixteen years I have prized, loved, and enjoyed my intercourse with your wonderful father as a chief treasure of life. I cannot but weep very literally over my loss. But now, "his faith let me follow, considering the blessed end of his conversation, and knowing that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." . . .'

From Rev. James Stewart, M.D., D.D., Lovedale, South Africa :—

' . . . I believe that from far and near you must have received expressions of sympathy and regret that your father has been called home. A good many of us who are getting old, and who know his work and his worth, feel his death very much. There was something about your father, a simplicity and directness of action and character, that won my heart ; and I may confess that my regard for him was not far removed from affection and love. He was spared to you and to us for a very long time, and now he is with Christ, and the great mainstay of that other life is so far revealed.'

From Rev. Professor Warfield, D.D., Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey :—

'THE OLD HODGE HOUSE,
'PRINCETON, N.J., 19th July 1897.

'MY DEAR MISS BROWN,—I have just received the announcement of your father's death, and sit down at once

to express my sympathy with you and the rest of the bereaved household, and my own grief and appreciation of the long and good life's work which your father was permitted to do in the vineyard of the Lord. It is given to few men to wear out so many years in service, and to fewer still to give, through all these years, a service of the quality which he rendered. Surely there can abide but little regret in the hearts of those he left behind him: he has earned his rest, and we would be unkind to begrudge him, at this late day, his entrance into his reward. The legacy he has left behind him in the remembrance of his home-life, must be very precious to you who have lived close to him: to us who are afar off, he has left also the legacy of an example of a long life worthily spent, and of untiring devotion to his calling as a winner of souls, and of a series of works which we value, and which we will continue to value. No one can estimate the good his work on the *Second Advent* has done: and his Commentaries have seemed to many of us to distil the very essence of the Gospel. My colleague, Dr. Wistar Hodge, whose judgment was most fastidious, was wont to say that your father's *Commentary on Romans*, in the Bible-class series, was simply a perfect book of its kind.—Believe me, my dear Miss Brown, with great sympathy, faithfully yours,

BENJ. B. WARFIELD.'

From Rev. A. R. Fausset, York:—

'BURNSIDE BOARDING-HOUSE,
'ILKLEY-IN-WHARFDALE, July 26th, 1897.

'DEAR MISS BROWN,—I am sure you will forgive me, personally a stranger, though not unknown by name to you, for expressing my warmest sympathy in your recent bereavement. Your revered father has "come to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

‘I had the privilege of being a fellow-worker with him in a Commentary, and though I but once met him at my house in York, yet I was honoured occasionally by his correspondence.

‘I have just had forwarded to me the beautiful account of his last day upon earth, and his repetition of those sweet lines, which I desire may be mine too, whenever the Lord shall call me away.

“And when I’m to die, receive me, I’ll cry,
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why.”

‘With renewed expressions of condolence, I am, yours
respectfully, A. R. FAUSSET.’

From Rev. Frank H. White, Talbot Tabernacle,
Notting Hill, London:—

‘. . . A grand old man indeed ! a man greatly beloved. Personally I count it one of the most precious memories of my ministerial life that I am able to think of him as one to whom I was allowed to look up as to a friend and father in Israel.

‘My one heart-cry in reading the notice of his death in this morning’s *Christian* was, Oh, that I dare hope that on very many of the young ministers of fair and highly favoured Scotland his mantle might fall ! How powerfully and sweetly in years gone by, as well as of late, have his reverent, lucid, and loving expositions of the Gospels affected my own heart and life ! I cannot but bless God at every remembrance of him.’

From Rev. John Hector, Principal of Duff College,
Calcutta :—

‘. . . As one of his students, your father took a loving, personal interest in me, and he continued to show the

same interest all along during the years since I left the Hall. It was indeed a source of inspiration to me in my work in this far-off heathen land—his teaching and example were so filled with the spirit of missions. It is wonderful to think of that life, covering well-nigh the whole century. His name will stand associated henceforth with the religious life and progress of Scotland in the nineteenth century. His work will be fruitful there and far beyond for years to come. We thank God for raising up such leaders. May the students be worthy of them !’

From Rev. William Riddell, M.D., Medical Missionary, Wu-King-Fu, Swatow, China :—

‘ . . . We often thought and talked of Dr. Brown out here, and would often remark how long a time he was living, and wonder if we should have the pleasure of calling on him when we went home.

‘ We followed with much interest the obituary notices in the newspapers, and our chief feeling is one of thankfulness to God for his long and useful life, and the privilege we enjoyed in his acquaintance. He always had a warm heart to our China mission, and we remember how he took the trouble to search us out at Caloumpeat Road, and call on us in his free and hearty and sympathetic way.’

From the Very Rev. Principal Stewart, D.D., St. Andrews :—

‘ . . . Among the many happy memories of the time we spent at Aberdeen, some of the most pleasant are to me associated with your father. His alertness, physical and mental, his unfailing cheerfulness, his sympathy and kindness, were an example to us all. He was among those whom it was a privilege to know.’

From the Rev. Dr. Gloag :—

To the Editor of the *Aberdeen Journal*.

‘SIR,—In the Monday issue of your paper you have an article on the late Principal Brown; and I wish to add my testimony to his great worth and scholarship. He was one of the most distinguished (if not the most distinguished) ministers of the Free Church of Scotland. It is many years since my attention was first drawn to his works: it was his treatise on the Second Advent which most thoroughly demolished the extravagant theories of the pre-Millenarians. Some years ago I received a letter from him, and we carried on a correspondence until his death. His letters, which were on theological matters, I retain and highly prize. When in Aberdeen last winter acting as Professor of Biblical Criticism, I made his personal acquaintance, and saw him frequently. His mind was entire, and his conversation on Biblical questions very interesting. As you state, he was a member of the Revision Committee, but he often dissented from their findings.—Yours, etc.,

PATON J. GLOAG.

‘28 REGENT TERRACE,
EDINBURGH, 7th July 1897.’

From Madame de Faye, Geneva, wife of M. le pasteur Clement de Faye (*née* Catherine Henderson, Aberdeen) :—

‘. . . Your dear father has influenced my own life in more ways than one. When I was young, I felt inclined towards millenarian views, and reading his book quite settled my mind upon that point. His two books on Dr. Duncan, whom I knew and venerated long ago, have been a never-failing source of instruction which I often take up, and never lay down without having learned something from the author or from his subject. In reading the interesting article in the *Free Press*, I was much struck by

an omission—any particular reference to his mother. If his father gave him refined and literary tastes, from all I have heard, Mrs. Brown's consistent and judicious Christian training, at a time when vital godliness was low, exercised a decided influence not only on her family circle, but beyond it. My own mother told me that when she returned to the cold north after a stay in England, during which she met with evangelical Christians, and had decided to follow the Lord, she was very anxious to get acquainted with living Christians in her own circle who might help her with their experience. Among all her acquaintances she found but two ladies, who were much her seniors in years—Mrs. Provost Brown, and a Miss Fordyce, of the Brucklay family. Mrs. Brown became her dear and intimate counsellor, and later on, all the members of her family were dear to her. Your uncle, Mr. William Brown, was for years the next-door neighbour of my parents, and used to be with them at all hours, even till late at night. But that was before I can remember.'

From Mrs. Isabella Fyvie Mayo :—

'1A ALBYN PLACE, ABERDEEN,
'5th July 1897.

'MY DEAR MISS BROWN,—And so the messenger has come!—to take from *you* the great, beautiful duty of your life—but to lead your dear father into the fulness of life and joy for which he has been waiting so patiently, and of which he had already so large a measure.

'You must be very sorry for yourself. You cannot have one thought of sorrow for him. He has lived out all his days. . . .

'Last evening, returning from service, I noticed all your blinds down. A fear suggested itself—to be put away by the thought that the sign probably meant summer holidays. *And so it did!* Summer holidays, with cloudless skies and unhindered renewal of youth and strength!

‘ May God be with you to sustain and cheer you in the loneliness which follows ever on accomplished service.’

From Rev. Principal Dykes, D.D., London :—

‘ 38 COOLHURST ROAD, CROUCH END, N.,

‘ LONDON, 15th July 1897.

‘ Miss Brown, Aberdeen.

‘ DEAR MISS BROWN,—In common with the whole church, I have noticed with deep regret the loss sustained through the death of your honoured father. He has been spared to do his work and wear his honours to a very advanced age ; but he remained so long youthful in spirit and comparatively vigorous, that one could never realise how old he was. To me he was always kind, and I feel that his death is a personal bereavement, as well as a great loss to Biblical scholarship.

‘ I trust you will forgive me for adding these few words to the numerous letters of condolence you are sure to receive from all quarters, and from many better qualified to speak of him than I.

‘ Believe me to be, with sincere and respectful sympathy in your affliction, yours most truly,

‘ J. OSWALD DYKES.’

The last we give is from an old student for whom he had a high esteem, Rev. Dr. Elmslie of Christchurch, New Zealand. It is addressed to Miss Brown, in anticipation of the result of Dr. Brown’s illness.

‘ CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.,

‘ 29th Aug. 1897.

‘ DEAR MISS BROWN,—I read with sorrow your last, which I received a little ago. And in reply, I wish to send a message of love to your father. It may cheer his heart, if he has not gone home ere this reach you. I desire you to remind him that I was one of his first students—that I heard his lectures introductory to the Gospels, and also his exegetical comments on the same,

and that those Gospel lessons have been the foundation themes of my ministry for these five and thirty years. It may interest Dr. Brown to know also that during this winter and last I have been taking a class of students in Canterbury College over the same ground—a volunteer class of twenty-nine gown students, six or eight of whom are preparing for the ministry and the mission-field.

Kindly give your dear father this parting message of love from an old student. Tell him that I have never ceased to be grateful for much profit received in those days of long ago, and that, despite my much unworthiness, I cherish the hope of meeting him in ‘the sweet by and by,’ among those who shall have washed their robes, and “made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”—With kind Christian regards, yours sincerely,
J. ELMSLIE.’

Many more were the wreaths contributed by his friends. Noblemen and gentlemen, whose personal acquaintance was but slight, were eager to testify their regard for one whose life had been so useful, and whose character was so high. Slowly, perhaps, but steadily, he had been rising all along in the esteem of the community, and never had he stood higher than at the close of his life. No man had died richer in all that constitutes real wealth and is entitled to real honour. Yet no man would have said more humbly or more cordially, ‘Non nobis, Domine!’

THE END

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Blaikie, William Garden, 1820-1899.
David Brown, D. D., LL. D. : professor and
principal of the Free church college, Aberdeen;
a memoir, by William Garden Blaikie ...
London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1898.
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